EXTRAORDINARY PLAY *with* ORDINARY THINGS

Recycling Everyday Materials to Build Motor Skills

BARBARA SHER, M.A., OTR

Therapy Skill Builders

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Extraordinary Play with Ordinary Things

Recycling Everyday Materials to Build Motor Skills

by

Barbara Sher, M.A., OTR

Illustrations drawn by

Janet Young

Therapy Skill Builders
A division of
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3830 E. Bellevue/P.O. Box 42050
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Dedication

To all the incredibly wonderful children who have played with me, my clients, my students, neighborhood pals, and especially my clever daughters Marissa and Roxanne. They have all taught me a lot about how to find the fun.

About the Author

Barbara Sher has been an occupational therapist for more than 20 years. A child-development specialist, she works with children with special needs, gives workshops, and writes a column for parents. She has produced two videos and written and published four other books of activities to enrich children's lives—and one book for parents on enhancing their own lives. Barbara also uses games in her rehabilitative therapy with adults and elders.

About the Illustrator

Janet Young says she is in her right mind because she is left-handed. She was born with a pencil in her hand and has been a professional artist since age 12. Her credits include portraits, illustrations, and covers for record albums.

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Preface

One time when I was asked to do an impromptu assessment of a child while visiting his home, I looked around to see what "equipment" I could use and spied a pile of newspaper. I found that newspaper sections laid on the floor would do quite nicely for evaluating the child's motoric ability to jump and hop and for evaluating his motor planning skills in broad jumping. By asking him to slalom through a line of sections, I got an idea of his spatial sense. Even his eye-hand coordination could be assessed by rolling newspapers into a bat and scrunching other newspapers into a ball to play a spontaneous game of baseball.

Another time, when visiting the remote Pacific island of Palau, a Head Start teacher asked me to do some games for her class. Again newspapers provided me with enough equipment to do a wide variety of games that kept the youngsters happily active for over an hour and also proved—since no English was spoken—that newspaper games are cross-cultural!

Because many of my clients have low incomes, the schools have low budgets, and I have strong environmental concerns, I have found many other types of therapeutic games that use ordinary materials. I use mainly recyclable materials with my clients during home visits, in my school-based mainstreaming movement classes, and when giving workshops for teachers and other professionals. I also get ideas from the kids themselves by watching them do a variation on a game I have presented or by simply giving them, for example, a pile of empty yogurt containers and asking them to see how many games they can invent.

I also like to use recyclables to encourage children to make up spontaneous movement games using things found around the house, to show professionals that you don't need expensive equipment to be therapeutic, to show parents the extensive perceptual motor therapy that is possible on a limited budget, and to show everyone that at last there is a purpose for even yesterday's news!

In addition to the environmental benefits that accrue from using recycled materials, the element of play in these activities is extremely valuable. If a child needs to increase arm strength, for example, I could ask the child to do arm lifts and explain why they are beneficial. If the child is feeling compliant, we may actually do armlifts during the session, but the chances of armlifts being done at home are slight, and the chances of the child happily doing this exercise for me during subsequent visits are even slighter.

However, if the same child is asked to throw a ball at a pyramid of weighted cans or pick up a cardboard box and fling it at a punching bag, there will be enthusiastic cooperation. And if that child knows that every time we have a session, we are going to play games, that child is going to come willingly.

I have found that the same principle is true with older people. When I started working with elders after years of working with children, I was surprised initially at how "obedient" they were. I said, "Lift your arm ten times," and they did. No arguing. However, I found that when I said, "Let's hit the hanging balloon back and forth to each other with these long-handled sponges," I got livelier clients who put more spring into their responses because they were having fun doing therapy.

1
INTRODUCTION

The Benefits of Games as Therapy

Games are a form of play, and play is becoming recognized as an important component in learning. Play is a nonthreatening way to learn in a relaxed setting, and people are more able to take in new information and experiment with old information if they are in a relaxed state of mind.

Figure 1. Young games elders play.

Additionally, using materials in a variety of ways provides many opportunities to learn the same skill as well as promoting playfulness. Occupational scientists who study the implications of play and the characteristics that promote playfulness have found that "an environmental characteristic that affects playfulness is the presence of a variety of toys and objects, provision of novelty, and multiple opportunities" (Knox 1991).

Working on the same skill in many different ways avoids splinter skills, where a child is able to do one aspect of a skill but cannot transfer that knowledge to other aspects of that skill.

Playing also stimulates the release of endorphins (the "happy hormones") and engages the whole person. It gives the player hope that things are going to get better and a sense of well-being that the way things are now is okay, too. Having fun is just plain fun.

Professionals need to be enthused about their work as much as the students and clients. Repeating the same lessons, games, or exercises—no matter how useful or interesting—can cause burnout quickly if you are the type of person who enjoys or thrives on change. Using games as therapy adds that variety.

Figure 2. Therapy is limited only by one's imagination.

Recycling ordinary materials expands your possibilities enormously compared to purchasing expensive, ready-made materials. The added variety increases the players' skill levels, and using recyclables has the added benefit of making you feel that you are extending the length of time the world will exist, too!

Games also allow you to play with your students and clients, forging a deeper connection than is possible in the usual context of a professional/client relationship. Game playing is an equalizer. Everyone is having fun together, even if it is therapeutic and instructive!

Who Can Play These Games

These games are for children of all ages who have special needs and children from 4 to 12 years old (preschool to sixth grade) with normal abilities. Group games are adapted to fit integrated mainstreamed groups according to skill levels (see the section on **How to Adapt and Individualize a Game,** below).

Many of these games can be used with groups of elders in skilled-nursing facilities. People in this older population enjoy the fun, too.

Chapter 13, Games for People Who Have Hemiplegia, gives suggestions on the types of games that would be most helpful for this population. This chapter also references other appropriate ideas that are given throughout this book.

Chapter 14, Games for People Who Use Wheelchairs, presents activities that can be used with people of differing ages who are in wheelchairs. Although not a comprehensive list, this chapter presents a sense of what is possible.

How to Adapt and Individualize a Game

These games can serve a wide variety of people—from children to elders and from those who are physically normal to those with multiple disabilities—and they all can play the games together. The secret to making them versatile is to individualize the game: identify the skill or strength of the person(s) with the low skill level, and capitalize on that.

A classroom containing children of differing ages and/or skill levels provides an environment that is more like playing with brothers and sisters or the kids in the neighborhood—a natural mix of kids. Children will each find their own ways to participate in group games. In a group running game, for example, a player may hook up with a faster partner or run along the edge of the group. In a jumping game, motorically less able or younger children may jump beside the milk cartons instead of over them. Deal with comments or snickering by pointing out that everyone has their own way of doing things, and that trying one's best is what matters.

Children in integrated classrooms have shown that they are only too willing to help their mentally and/or physically challenged friends. The concern about mainstreaming had been that children would be cruel and say hurtful things to the ones who don't look normal. But children have proven repeatedly that they are kind and will lovingly go out of their way to be helpful, deriving much joy and pride from the smallest accomplishments of their friends.

One year I had a child in the classroom who was so affected by cerebral palsy that his only voluntary movement was 20 degrees of arm abduction and some finger flexion. With these movements he was able to perform such actions as ringing a modified bell, spinning a pointer, and touching a colored square. When the class played a game of "freeze," for example, he could decide when they stopped and started by ringing his bell. Or he could make everyone move a certain way according to the color he touched. He loved the power he wielded and grinned along with everyone else.

Precautions

Children who have special needs must be monitored in all activities. If they have respiratory problems, are they getting out of breath? If they have a problem with balance, are they in danger of getting hurt if they fall? If they have brittle-bone disease, is the activity too vigorous for them? People who have epilepsy should be observed for preseizure behavior. In other words, because children have unique considerations depending on their individual problems, these weaknesses need to be monitored just as much as their strengths need to be encouraged.

Figure 3. A mainstreamed child gets to be the leader of the group.

How to Use This Book

Browse through the ideas first and jot down any that appeal to you or fit your student/client needs. (If you have a list of possibilities ready when you next work with

A person in a wheelchair who had decreased arm extension was able to play soccer using a rolled-up newspaper as a bat. A child with only minimal leg flexion was able to take his turn playing kick-the-milk-carton when the cartons were set in just the right spots. This same child got to be the star in a play about a king who was told by a magic fairy that his wish would come true if he could kick his leg (one of the child's only motoric skills) three times. Imagine his thrill (and the audience's) when he did those three kicks and his wish—that the other kids in this mainstreamed class would sing and dance for him—was granted!

that group or that individual, you won't have to be thumbing through the book that day mumbling, "What *were* those ideas I liked. . . .") A wide selection of activities has been included because clinicians all have different tastes and tempos, and an idea that may seem too wild (or too slow) for one person feels just right for another.

Skills Enhanced by These Activities

Each chapter is divided into sections according to the skill that is being reinforced by the activity. These skills are described below.

- **Gross Motor** is any general strengthening of the large body muscles. Activities that reinforce gross motor skills include jumping, running, and hopping. This skill forms a solid foundation for health and physical well-being.
- **Fine Motor** involves manipulating and strengthening the small muscles of the hand and foot (activities include drawing, clay work, playing with marbles). This skill makes the difference between someone who is "all thumbs" and someone who has "a way with their hands." The skill is more a matter of experience than an innate gift for the few.
- **Eye-Hand Coordination** encourages the hand to work with the eyes (such as in throwing, stringing beads, and bowling). This major skill helps with all other activities in life—including sports, where keeping one's eye on the ball is paramount.
- **Eye-Foot Coordination** does the same for the foot as the above does for the hand: it encourages a collaborative effort between the body parts (activities include kicking, leaping over hurdles, stepping on stones). This skill helps to prevent tripping and stumbling on life's unexpected obstacles.
- **Spatial Sense** requires knowing where one is in space and how things relate to each other (activities that encourage this are puzzles and "blind" walking). This awareness helps to keep one from getting lost and aids in knowing which way is up!

- **Laterality** is knowing internally that the body has two separate halves which can function independently. The ability to isolate the muscles on one side helps a child learn to hop, and being able to integrate the two sides helps a child to learn to skip. It is this sense that some things are on the right side and some on the left that helps a person learn the difference between a *b* and a *d*, a *q* and a *p*.

- **Balance** is the basis of all movement and requires an internal awareness that enables the person to be quick and flexible in their movements. Balance games (tiptoe walking, rocking, balance beam work, and walking with something balanced on the head) encourage postural awareness. This awareness helps one deal with the external activities of life by working from a centered sense of self.

- **Motor Planning** requires the ability to plan movements, even if this planning is only subconscious (activities include obstacle courses, climbing a tree, broad jumping, etc.). It is this awareness that aids a person in dealing with new experiences and getting around, over, or under physical obstacles.

- **Rhythm** encourages a sense of timing (dancing, clapping, and jump rope games all enhance this skill). A sense of rhythm helps reading and speaking to go smoothly and prevents that klutzy look on the dance floor!

- **Flexibility** is the ability to bend and twist one's body to keep the joints in good moving condition (exercises include fitting into small spaces, body maneuvering, and stretching). This skill keeps the body in shape to meet life's various demands.

- **Imagination** keeps the mind in an open, flexible state so that one never stops seeing the possibilities of life (pretending, improvisations, and acting enhance this skill).

- **Group Playing** includes the social interactions that occur on the nonverbal level, where the goal is to have fun and enjoy each other and, along the way, to increase one's motor skills.

Unstructured Play (Chaos?)

If you are a person who can tolerate chaos, it is good, sometimes, to have an unstructured play period with recycled materials. Put the materials in the middle of the floor and ask, "How many games can you think of to do with this stuff?" In other words, "Have at it!"

One day in an after-school movement class, I emptied out a grocery bag of things brought in by helpful parents—plastic foam trays, milk cartons, plastic bags, egg cartons, and cardboard boxes.

The kids in the class were of differing skill levels and ages (4 to 10 years), like a neighborhood gang of friends.

At first the kids were grabbing things and running around; things were moving fast. And just when I worried that I had better start to make order, a pattern began to emerge: the kids who liked to move fast were zooming in and around the others, pushing the cardboard boxes. An older girl was showing a younger one how to throw a plastic foam tray in the air and hit it with another tray. A little child was pretending to be a turtle, crawling around with a cardboard box over her.

On the sideline, a boy who was more developed intellectually than motorically was figuring out how to stack milk cartons in such a way as to make the sturdiest construction. Then he jumped over it. Some others saw him do that and took turns jumping over them, too. Others began using the plastic foam trays as skates and started to glide around the room.

Figure 4. Joyful games with recyclables.

I saw that things were beginning to form into a productive pattern, but I wondered what other adults might be seeing. I worried that if teachers came through the gym, they would see me as a ditz, letting things get totally out of control. I wondered if I was too comfortable with chaos. (You know the type—whose desk appears cluttered but knows exactly what's in what pile. Usually.)

The reason I don't mind if things get a little loose once in awhile is because I know that if I yell "Freeze!" or "Everyone on the black line," they will all cooperate (even if not on the first yell). They've learned it means I am going to introduce another game or, in this case, have the children show their invented games for everyone to play.

I know that control is possible again; I also know it's not always apparent to others.

On that worrying day, a teacher walked in and stopped to watch. I was aware of his reputation as a strict teacher who insisted on discipline in his class, and I thought he must be appalled at what he was seeing. He had a furrowed look on his brow as he walked up to me.

"Oh boy," I thought, "here it comes."

He said, instead, "Everyone is so involved and it all looks so interesting. But . . . what are they doing?"

"They're seeing how many games they can make up using recycled materials," I said pleasantly.

"Ah," he said and, smiling broadly, walked away.

Later I found out that he was the head of the recycling program at the school.

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Reilly, M. 1974. *Play as exploratory learning.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publication.

2
Games to Play with Newspapers

Newspapers are available everywhere. If you don't want to read one first, go to the nearest post office and you'll find their wastebaskets full of advertising newspapers that are sent free through the mail and thrown away by box holders. You might feel like a bag lady going through the wastebaskets, but it's for a good cause!

One of the nice things about playing with balls made of scrunched-up newspapers is that the "balls" are very light, requiring only a little strength to manipulate. Additionally, children will not be afraid to be hit with them.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Newspaper Jumps

Lay a newspaper section down to mark the start. Call this section "home" and explain that each game begins from "home." Lay a second square down in front of "home" and have the player jump, feet together, over the second square. Then lay a third square down in line with the first two, and have the player jump over both. Continue adding one square at a time and see how many squares the player can jump. Note the number and see if the player can jump further during the next session.

I know newspaper sections are really rectangular in shape, but I am calling them "squares" because I like the sound of it!

Leap the Squares

This is similar to *Newspaper Jumps*, above, except that the player *leaps* (one leg leading, the other following) over the newspaper sections (figure 5). There are two ways to do the leaping. The first method is to take a running start and then leap; the second is to leap from a standstill directly in front of the squares. Try both ways.

If you are working on strengthening one side, ask the player to lead with the weaker leg when leaping. If you want to add the element of motor planning, ask the player to take a running start (that is, move "home" back a few feet).

Figure 5. Leap the squares.

Square Lines

Lay a number of newspaper sections in a straight line, each square a small distance from the other. Ask a player to stand on "home," then jump from one square to the next and so on, down to the end of the line of squares. Have the player jump sideways down the line of squares, then backward. Have the player hop with the right leg and then with the left. Ask the player to jump every other square or, if appropriate, to jump to every third square.

Academic Squares

Number the squares (1, 2, 3, and so on) with a large, dark marker. Lay the squares out sequentially or randomly, and ask the children to jump from one specific square to another (for example, from 1 to 3). If the squares are not placed sequentially, the jump from square 1 to square 2 might be easy, but the jump from 2 to 3 might be a real doozy. Alternatively, use the alphabet: children jump from A to B or to the letters that spell their name. Call out the sequence to be jumped (use words, such as *CAT,* or nonsense sequences, such as *DDFA*) and see if the players can remember the sequence and do the jumps in order.

Academic skills are valuable to include in motor games because children are still learning through their bodies, and these types of games reinforce their school work in a way that is fun and natural for them. Remembering sequences will help them with math, science, and spelling. Asking the child's teachers what academic work needs reinforcement will earn appreciation from the teacher and continuity for the child.

You can also work on prepositions by asking the child to stand *on* the square, then *beside* it, to stand *over* it (straddle), jump *off* it, go *around* it, and end by going *under* it.

Square Moves

See the description of this game in Chapter 8 under **Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills.** In this game, the children move the squares about with a variety of motions. Newspaper sections can be used for this game, but carpet squares or the bottoms or sides of cardboard boxes work even better, so use them if you have them.

Private Squares

This activity involves a series of movements for one or more persons to do on a newspaper section. See the details under **Games to Enhance Group Playing** in this chapter.

Newspaper Hats

Remember making hats and boats out of newspapers? See figure 6 below for a step-by-step guide and give your students practice in folding and manipulating.

Here is another way to make a newspaper hat that is easier for the younger or less coordinated child. Have the child place three sheets of newspaper on the head and wrap masking tape around the paper at the level of the child's forehead, cinching in the paper with the tape to form the hat's crown. The brim protrudes below the tape. This produces a fairly wide-brimmed hat. To create a derby-type hat, roll and crumple up the paper that sticks out beyond the tape. Children can then paint their hats, if desired.

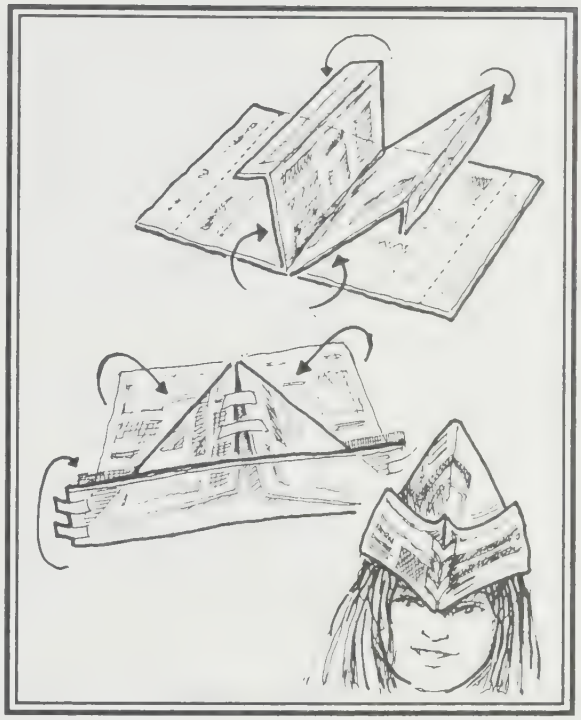


Figure 6. Newspaper hats.

Tearing Shapes

Children tear shapes from a single sheet of paper. Start with simple shapes (such as circles and triangles) and go on to more complicated shapes (such as people and animals).

Ball Flick

Scrunch up a piece of paper to make a small ball and wrap it with masking tape to keep it compressed. See how far your player can flick it with a thumb and an index finger. Have races! Set up goals, such as two pennies a few inches apart. Can the player flick the ball between the pennies?

Solitaire

See how many playing cards a player can throw that land on a newspaper section (figure 7). When the student has used all the cards in the deck, start over, but move the newspaper section a little further away from the student.

Figure 7. Solitaire.

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

A Step at a Time

Scrunch up some newspaper into a ball and wrap it with tape to keep it compressed. Face your student, standing fairly close, and toss the ball back and forth. Every time you catch and throw the ball successfully, take one step back. Continue this game until you are so far apart for the skill level involved that you or your partner can no longer catch it; then each of you take one step toward each other. This way, you end the game with success. Note how many steps you were able to take (for example, "We took ten steps away from each other!") so that at the next session, you can try for 11!

For beginners, sit down to play the game, and fanny-walk backward after each successful catch.

For the very beginning ball player, roll the ball back and forth. The sophisticated beginning ball player can roll the ball with different parts of the body: elbow, chin, knee, and so on. If necessary, make a larger ball by adding more newspaper.

Have more advanced players put one hand behind their backs and catch with the other hand.

Upside-Down Roll

Partners bend over from the waist and toss or roll the ball back and forth to each other between their legs (figure 8). This stance also works on balance and is a good way to get fresh, oxygenated blood to the brain!

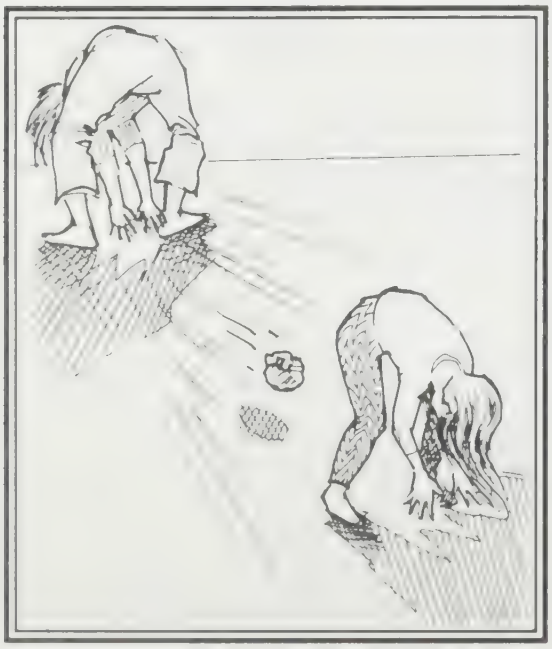


Figure 8. Upside-down roll.

General Targets

Throw a newspaper ball into or at a variety of targets: a rope coil, a large hoop, a wastebasket, a dishpan, a bucket, a coffee can, a shoe, a garden hose coil, an inner tube, a bicycle tire, a rock, a street sign, or a hole in the ground. By introducing a large variety of targets, you can lead kids into making up their own eye-hand coordination games on their own.

When my 2-year-old toddled over to me with her used yogurt container and a small rubber ball and suggested we play a target game with it, I knew she had gotten my message.

Square Mark

Use a newspaper section as "home base," from which children can practice a variety of skills.

- How many lit candles can be extinguished with a water-filled squirt bottle?
- How many dominoes can be knocked down with a party blower? (Dominoes can be set up side by side and knocked over one by one, or set up behind each other for a mass knock down.) This is a good game for working on breath control and oral-motor development.
- How far can the spear (newspaper bat) be thrown? This also develops arm extension and strength.
- What is the farthest distance a paper airplane can fly in three trials?

Human Hoop

Become a human basketball hoop for your student by using your arms to form a large circle in front of your body. Encourage the player to throw a newspaper ball into the "hoop." The advantage of being mobile is that you can move around, thereby insuring that clients must make some throws from the weaker side or use their eyes for scanning if you move continually and slowly. The disadvantage is that sometimes you might get hit in the face (but then, no one promised that the job of a therapist or teacher is free of occupational hazards). To minimize personal danger, encourage clients to toss underhand gently for this game.

Ball Toss

Ask your player to try the following with a firmly taped newspaper ball:

- Throw low and catch with two hands.
- Throw higher and higher, catching with two hands.
- Start low and catch with the dominant hand.
- Catch with the nondominant hand, putting the preferred hand in a pocket or behind the body.
- Catch underhand.
- Catch overhand.
- Throw low (or high) and clap once (twice, three times, etc.); catch with one (or two) hands.
- Throw against a wall and catch it.
- Throw against a wall, clap once, and then catch it.
- Throw from one hand to the other with eyes open, then with eyes closed.
- Throw underhand, turn around, and catch.
- Lie down, throw the ball, stand up, and catch it.
- Walk and keep the ball in the air using just the backs of the hands.

- Throw and catch standing on one foot.
- Throw and catch with one eye (or both eyes) closed.
- See how far the ball can be thrown.
- Balance the ball on your head, bend forward, and catch the ball with your hands.
- Catch the ball in a milk carton, a plastic gallon bottle with the bottom cut out, or upside-down traffic cones.

(These ideas are also described in Chapter 9 using sockballs.)

Partner Toss

Throw two balls between two people (you and your student/client? your client and a sibling or neighborhood friend?) so that both throw and catch at the same time, practically. Vary the rules:

- Both toss underhand.
- Both toss overhand.
- One person tosses underhand and the other overhand.
- One person throws one or more seconds later than the other.
- Both balls are thrown by one person so that the other one has to catch a ball with each hand. (You can have kids gain experience with one-handed catching by starting with things that are easy to grasp, such as pillows, scarves, and rag dolls.)

Figure 9. Newspaper golf.

Baseball

Good old American baseball can be played with newspapers by tightly rolling up and taping a section or two of the paper to form a bat. The thicker the bat, the firmer it is, so construct the bat with your child's skill level in mind. The ball can be made larger or smaller depending upon how many newspaper sheets you scrunch up. (This game is also described in Chapter 9 using sockballs.)

Variation: Have the player grasp the bat with a hand at each end, holding it horizontally to hit the ball.

Golf

Golf can be played with the same equipment as baseball, but with the "club" in a different position. Tape newspaper squares to the floor for holes. The object is to see how many strokes it takes to get a newspaper ball from one square to another (figure 9). (This game is also described in Chapter 9 using sockballs.)

Croquet

Make a ball with scrunched-up newspaper; construct bats from rolled and taped sections of newspaper. On the floor, place some cardboard boxes that have been opened on both ends. The boxes are the wickets and the newspaper bats are the mallets.

Badminton

Use real badminton racquets, a newspaper ball for a birdie, and a hanging hoop for a net (see Chapter 4 for instructions on making an inexpensive hoop). This is not the exact equipment required for regulation badminton, but it will work. Balloons make nice birdies, too.

Bat Balance #1

Have children balance a newspaper bat horizontally on a hand, on fingers, on a thumb, on one finger. Have them walk while balancing the newspaper bat. Use the other hand. Balance it on the knee, the elbow, and so on.

Bat Balance #2

Balance the bat vertically on an open palm, a finger, an arm, a foot, a chin? a nose????

Bat Toss

- Toss the bat up and catch it.
- Toss the bat up, give it a half spin, and catch the other end.
- Toss the bat back and forth from hand to hand.
- Twirl the bat like a baton, winding it around the body and under the legs, making a figure eight.

Quicker Than the Eye

Hold a bat out horizontally in front with one hand; release and catch with the other (figure 10). Do the same activity, but hold the bat vertically. This is a good game to encourage motor planning and quick reflexes.

Reflex Catch

How fast are the reflexes? Hold a newspaper bat or a dowel vertically above the player's head. On the count of three, drop it and see how fast the player can catch it.

Figure 10. Quicker than the eye.

Mark the spot where the player caught it the first time and see if the player can catch it more quickly the next time.

Use a longer bat or dowel if the player is having difficulty catching it.

Have the player try each hand and see if there is a difference between the reflexes of the right and left sides.

Sword Fights

Although not necessarily the best game to encourage high-level eye-hand coordination skills, this is a definite winner for general laughs and reducing tension. In this activity, you and your client each take a bat and "en garde" and "touche" each other until the bats bend.

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Soccer

For more advanced eye-foot coordination, have your child "dribble" a newspaper ball with a foot, as the players do in soccer. Dribbling involves keeping the ball under control, moving it along the ground while walking or running. The ball should be tapped gently with the inside of the foot and should never be more than one foot ahead of the "dribbler." (Have the player try the outside of the foot as well.) The player stops the ball with the sole of the foot. Once the student gets the idea, lay out a slalom course with newspaper squares around which the ball is to be maneuvered.

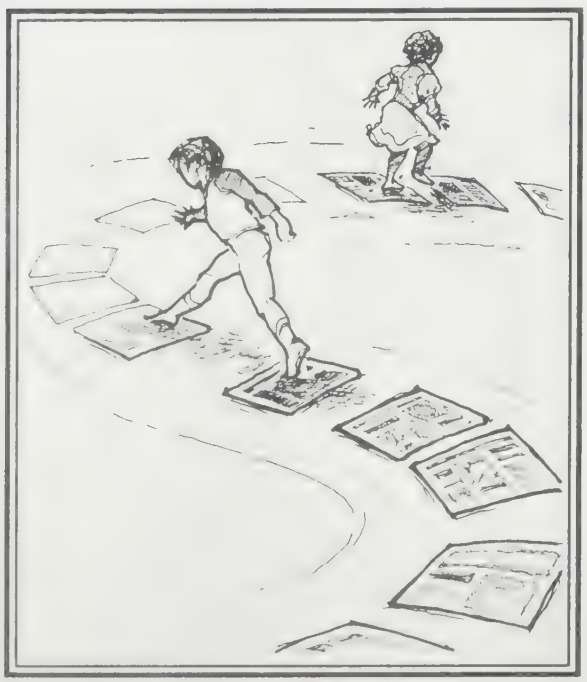


Figure 11. Stepping stones.

Stepping Stones

Lay some newspaper sections on the floor and pretend they are "stepping stones" that cross a creek. Take turns stepping from one stone to another (figure 11). Also take turns moving the stones to form different pathways. Sometimes put the stones close together for little steps, then move them far apart to encourage more of a stretch.

You can also give the child a ball to hold while stepping from stone to stone. The child then throws it into a basket on the other side of the creek.

Aimed Kicking

Set up a group of chairs and ask the kicker to aim the ball through the legs of the different chairs. Alternatively, tape a picture on a wall, near the floor, and have the child kick the ball at the target, or use a box lying on its side as a target.

Partner Kicking

Kick a newspaper ball back and forth to each other.

Legs Only

Players put newspaper balls on the tops of their feet and toss the balls to themselves or others, using only feet and knees to keep the balls off the floor.

Bat Jump

Lay a bat down on the floor and have the player jump back and forth over it. Go back and forth slowly, then quickly. Use certain rhythms in jumping (for example, jump twice in place on each side before jumping over). Jump around the bat, both forward and backward.

Bat Walk

If you have played a lot of games with your newspaper bats and they are looking pretty wilted, you can still get one more activity out of them. Lay them down end to end and have the players walk on them like a tightrope. You can introduce all sorts of angles into the path of the tightrope that encourage the tightrope walkers to watch where their feet are going!

Games to Enhance Spatial Sense

Agility Run

Lay newspaper sections out in a line, each square a small distance from the other. The player weaves in and out of the squares like a slalom skier (figure 12). Add challenge to the activity by timing each run, so that the players work on improving their records. The object is to see how fast they can go without touching the sections.

Variations:

- Bounce a ball while weaving between the sections.
- Dribbling the ball adds eye-hand coordination to the task. Alternate hands.
- Kick a newspaper ball around the sections.

Figure 12. Agility run.

Choo-Choo Slalom

This game is similar to the *Agility Run* except that players line up to form a train that weaves in and out of the squares. The engine must be sure to

leave enough room for the rest of the train, especially the caboose, to make it around the squares without touching them. What are the squares? They are cows on the track, of course!

Blind Squares

Tape down a "home" section of paper and lay out at least three other sections at different distances and directions from the home square. Have the child walk from home to each square (name the squares #1, #2, #3). Then have the child close eyes (or use a blindfold or a paper bag over the head) and walk from home to the square you name. Say, for example, "You're standing on the home square. I am going to blindfold you, and I want you to walk from here to square #2, from there to square #3, then back to home."

Blind Walk

Scrunch up newspaper to form a ball and place it a distance away. Ask the player to close eyes (or put on a blindfold), walk over to the paper, and pick it up. (This is easier than it sounds. Try it yourself to get a feel for the internal awareness of space that is needed.)

Games to Enhance Laterality

Kicking

Ask students how far they can kick a scrunched-up newspaper ball, first with the right leg, then with the left. This is a good activity when you want to work on a child's lower extremity strength and balance.

Kick Croquet

Play croquet (described in **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination**) with a newspaper ball and some cardboard boxes that have been opened on both ends (laid on the floor, these boxes are the "wickets"). The goal is to kick the ball through the box and on to the next "wicket."

Stair Toss

Children throw a taped and flattened newspaper ball onto different steps of a staircase. Place a reward, such as raisins, nuts, or fruit, on each step for added incentive. The thrower gets to eat whatever is on the step where the ball lands. For variety, children might want to call out the number of the step they are trying to hit.

Games to Enhance Balance

Kangaroo Ball

Place a newspaper ball on the ground, then have the player pick it up with the knees and jump around like a kangaroo—slow jumps, long

jumps, sideways jumps. If you and/or others are playing, you could instruct the children to bump into each other (gently) and try to dislodge the balls.

Ball Dance

Ask the child to move a ball around the waist in one direction, then reverse and send it around in the opposite direction. Next, go around one knee, then the other knee, then both of them. Make a figure eight. Go around a thigh with the other leg lifted.

Dizzy Jump

Lay out six or seven newspaper sections in a straight line, then leave a fair amount of space between these and the eighth section. The player runs around the eighth section at least ten times until properly dizzy, then attempts to jump the other sections one at a time.

Games to Enhance Motor Planning

Throw and Jump

Have the child stand on a stool or a chair (according to ability), and hand the child a newspaper section. The child throws the paper to the floor, jumps down, and lands on it. Besides motor planning, this game helps the child learn to modify arm strength so as to control how far away the paper lands (the thicker the section, the more control is possible). This game is best played on a rug (the paper is less likely to slip than if it is on an uncarpeted floor). If the bare floor is the only option, you could tape down each section after it is thrown. You will end up with a group of taped newspapers at differing distances from each other, and you could play *Jumping Difference,* described below.

Jumping Difference

Tape newspaper sections down at various distances from each other so that a jump from one to the other could require a large effort or just a little tiny one. Depending on the accuracy you want to achieve, you could ask the jumper to aim for the center of the paper (mark a large circle in the center for visual aid), or it may be sufficient for the jumper just to touch any part of the paper. This same game, of course, could be played by jumping sideways or backward, leaping, and hopping. Ask the advanced who still need work on balance or who enjoy a challenge to twirl (turning a full circle in the air) before landing.

Broad Jumping

Lay a newspaper square on the floor, then have the child stand on the square and jump as far as possible. Tape a newspaper at the landing point and ask the child to try again, to see if this jump can go further and get past the second newspaper. Next try a running broad jump.

Games to Enhance Rhythm and Balance

Twirly Squares

Tape a newspaper section to the floor. Ask the child to jump in the air and do a quarter turn, a half turn, or a full turn before landing back on the square.

Rhythmic Squares

Ask the child to jump over the square, then to jump forward and immediately jump backward to the starting point. Or have the player jump from one side of the square to the other and back again. You can then work on rhythm by making up a series of patterns that include jumping from front to back, side to side, or even on the diagonal. Let the child make up a pattern.

Posture Walk

Have children put newspapers on their heads, encourage the proper posture, and go for a stroll.

Games to Enhance Flexibility

The Plow

Students lie on their backs, arms outstretched to the side. Put newspaper balls behind the students' heads, and encourage them to stretch their legs over their heads to pick up the balls (figure 13). (The Plow is a yoga position.)

Figure 13. The plow.

Staying Loose

A child holds a newspaper bat in both hands, the bat in front of the body and parallel to the floor. The player steps over the bat with each foot until the bat is behind the body, then the child steps each foot back over until the bat is in its original position.

Magic Wand

In this activity, the children stand in a line in front of you as you hold a magic wand. (The wand looks suspiciously like a rolled-up newspaper bat to those who don't believe in magic.) Explain that you are going to swing the wand horizontally and try to touch everyone's head and turn them into frogs. Whoever doesn't want to become a frog should duck,

so to speak. You might also swing the wand to touch their feet, in order to turn them into donkeys. Those not in the mood to be an ass must jump over the wand.

Swing at the players' heads and feet in random order, giving players a split second to jump or duck. Those who are touched by the magic wand must leave the circle and make "ribbit" or "hee-haw" noises (depending on what they were turned into). The game ends when all the players have been transformed into frogs or donkeys. (Magic works!)

Games to Enhance Imagination

Children are more willing to jump if they think they are playing the part of some superhero than if they are doing it because it is good therapy. Because it is often easier to enlist a child's cooperation if you add the element of imagination, the following game is included.

Magic Changes

The group sits in a circle with a newspaper bat in the center and chants, "A bat, a bat, what else can it be?" or "Magic, magic, magic do; What else can this be to you?" One player picks up the bat and uses it as if it were, for example, a back scratcher.

The group then chants the same words. The next person picks up the bat and uses it in another way—a magic wand, a saxophone, a stick horse, an oar, a snorkel, a drum major's baton, a cane, a pole for vaulting, a barbell for a weight lifter, a guitar. Anything is possible, even if it is not probable.

The chanting between each turn gives the next player an extra moment to plan something. A short song could be used instead of a chant, or a chant could be done in sign language.

Another time, you could use a newspaper section (figure 14). What else could that be? A giant washrag, you say? Well then, let everyone take a pretend shower and try it out!

Figure 14. Magic changes.

Games to Enhance Group Playing

If you are working with a child in a school situation who is motorically behind other students, it is a good idea to devise motor games that this child can play with the group. This increases the child's confidence and comfort level in playing with others. These newspaper games are good in

that you can ask each student to go from square to square using the method of locomotion that you call out. You might ask obviously well-coordinated children to do more complicated procedures such as twirling or doing a karate kick with each movement, so that they stay interested in the game. You can ask others, including the motorically slower students, simply to jump or do other, less complicated movements such as jumping sideways and backward. Students enjoy this means of being with the group and are quite happy (and relieved) to find that they can fit right in.

Lily Pads

Lay newspaper squares on the floor, one per child. Explain to the group that these are not really newspaper squares, they are lily pads, and that the children aren't really children, they are frogs. Have each frog stand on a lily pad while you put on music or sing a song. While the music is playing, the frogs must jump around, frog-like, until the music stops, at which point they must race madly to a pad. You will, of course, have removed one pad, but in this game the padless player isn't out. Rather, this frog shares a pad with another frog. When the music (or your singing) starts up again, you can suggest different ways for the frogs to move—skipping, walking backward, hopping, and so on.

The game will finally reach a point where quite a lot of frogs are clustering on one pad. The rule is that some part of each frog's body must touch the square, and holding onto or even lifting up another frog is allowed. Besides encouraging gross motor movements, this game also encourages physical closeness, which has a way of making kids feel friendlier toward each other since they are all in this same dilemma of having to get part of their body on the pad. This is a good game to play with a class of able children that also includes some less able students.

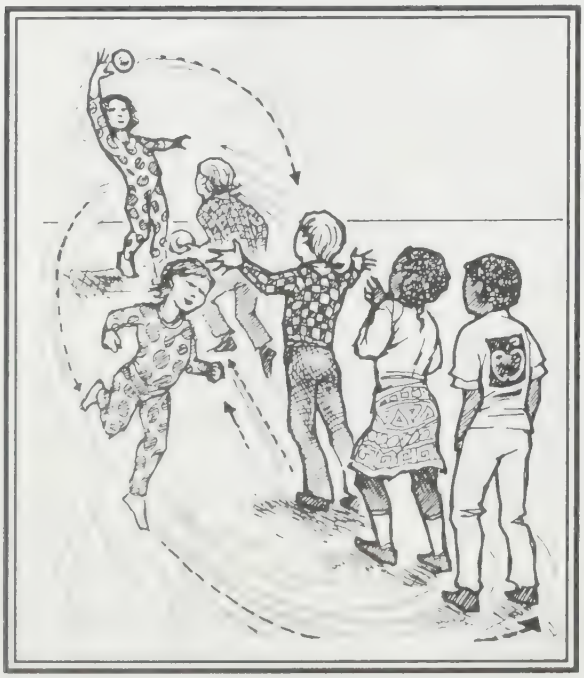


Figure 15. Line throwing.

Line Throwing

In this fast-moving ball game, children line up behind each other, facing a pitcher. The pitcher throws the ball to the first person in line. This player catches the ball, then runs out to the "pitcher's mound" and gets ready to toss the ball to the next player in line. The previous pitcher goes to the end of the line (figure 15). It takes a moment for everyone to get used to who goes where and when, but after the players do catch on, this becomes a useful ball game where everyone has a chance to catch and throw with practically no waiting time between turns.

Line Crawling

This is similar to *Line Throwing,* above, except that in this activity, children pass the ball from the front of the line to the rear, over their heads to the players behind them. The person at the end of the line then crawls on hands and knees through the legs of the other children, to the front of the line, at which time the ball passing begins again, and the last person crawls through.

You can add to the excitement of this game by asking the players to start the game by standing with their legs wide apart. With each successive crawler, the children narrow their stance until the last crawlers must squeeze through the legs by turning their bodies sideways. This is a good game for increasing body awareness!

Color

Use games with newspaper balls to increase awareness of colors. Form the children into a circle and toss the ball to the person who is wearing whatever color you call out. You could also use the children's names, or select traits such as eye color to increase their awareness of personal differences.

Run the Gauntlet

In this game, two lines of players face each other, about 10 feet apart. Each player is armed with a newspaper ball. Four or five other players then stand at one end of this gauntlet, ready to run between the double file of students (figure 16). In order for this game to help children increase their eye-hand coordination and not just turn into a wild free-for-all, tell the players that hits only count when they land on a certain spot (the runners' backs, for example). All runners who were hit on their backs then join one of the two lines.

On the next run through the gauntlet, tell the throwers that they must hit the backs of the legs of the remaining runners, or the hands, or the shoulders. Once all the runners have been hit, a new group of runners is selected. Scrunched-up newspaper balls that are lightly taped or not taped at all won't hurt when they hit, so runners get the thrill of the adrenalin rush without the pain.

Figure 16. Run the gauntlet.

Pattern Ball

Have a small group of players toss a newspaper ball to each other, and ask them to remember the pattern so they can repeat it: Joe threw the ball to Carmen, who threw the ball to Tony, who then threw the ball to Ruby, and so on. As the children are working through the sequence, switch objects they are to throw, substituting unusual items, such as scarves, can lids, rolled-up socks, and so on.

Figure 17. Group hurdles.

Group Hurdles

People in groups kneel beside each other, holding newspaper bats out in front. The last person in the line gets up, jumps over all the others' hurdles, and takes the place at the front of the line (figure 17). The last person in line then begins the same process. (You might want to set some limits on how high the bat hurdles are held.)

Number Bats

If you have a slew of bats made, divide the class up into groups. Have each group construct a numeral between one and ten on the floor with the bats. The whole class then has to jump, hop, skip, bunny hop, crab walk, or just slouch along that number of times. Each group decides the movement that will accompany their number.

Circle Ball Games

Have the children stand in a circle and throw newspaper balls to each other as you call out directions:

- Throw the ball to the person beside you.
- Throw the ball to the person across from you.
- Throw the ball to someone who is wearing red.
- Throw the ball to someone whose name starts with the letter ___.
- Throw the ball to someone with blue (green, brown, gold) eyes; brown (blond, red, black) hair; short (long, medium) hair.
- Name the person to whom you are going to throw the ball.

Vary the size of the ball by adding more scrunched up sheets of paper; the more tape you add, the firmer the ball.

Circle Squares

The players form a circle, everyone standing on their own section of newspaper (figure 18). From here they can:

- Take hands and slowly lower themselves as a group to squatting and then go back to standing.
- Join hands and start to sway from side to side. Everyone becomes aware of everyone else so that eventually the whole circle is swaying together. They will be able to feel when it is not quite right and when they are perfectly synchronized.
- Stay in rhythm with each other and jump from one section to the next in the circle. One person jumps off a section just as the next person jumps onto it. Establishing a rhythm with a drum or a song helps people coordinate with each other. Children can jump sideways or backward. Lengthen the distance between the squares. If the players are agile and the sections don't slip, have the children try jumping while doing a full turn in the air before landing on the next section.

Figure 18. Circle squares.

Races

Have children put newspaper squares on their heads and see how fast they can race.

Bat Relay

Use rolled-up newspaper bats for this relay. Two teams are lined up side by side. The first players run, touch an agreed-upon goal with a bat, then run back and hand their bats to next players in line.

Swat Tag

This somewhat grown-up version of "Duck, Duck, Goose" uses newspaper bats. The players are seated in a circle, and one player walks around the outside of the circle, touching everyone's back lightly with a bat. The child strikes one seated player more firmly, then runs around the circle with the "strikee" in pursuit. The striker then tries to put the bat in a box in the middle of the circle and sit down in the strikee's vacant spot before getting tagged.

Relay Squares

A relay game can be played with newspaper squares. In a relay game, a player goes from point A to point B, then returns to point A again, where the next player in line takes a turn (figure 19). Use one square to mark point A and another to mark point B. Each team of three should have its own set of squares so that no player has to wait too long for a turn.

How the players get from point A to point B is up for grabs. Here are some possibilities:

- Run to the other square, hop around it, and run back.
- Walk backward to the other square, skip around it backward, and run back.
- Skip to the other square, jump over it, hop back.
- Gallop to the other square, stand on it, sing out your name, and march back.

Figure 19. Relay squares.

- Bear-walk to the other square, stand on it, touch your nose to your toes, and twirl back. (Bear walk is like a crawl except that the legs are extended and the "bear" walks on flat feet.)
- Walk sideways to the square, tiptoe around it, then crawl backward to home.

Let the players take turns making the rules. The distance between points A and B depends on the skill level and "wiggle" factor of your group. The longer the run, the more energy it takes, but people have to wait longer for their turn.

This is not a competition. Each team receives points if everyone on the team finishes—somewhere between fifty and a zillion points or thereabouts. Everyone wins!

Shocking Squares

Lay out a random pattern of newspaper sections in a specified area. The players must stay inside the boundary without touching the squares, which are shocking and deadly and to be avoided. It is fun to use music to set the tone and the speed. If someone touches a square and falls down dead, that player must lie still, becoming a new obstacle which is also dangerously shocking. Whoever is left standing lays out the squares for the next game. To add even more challenge at different times in the game, reduce the space of the specified area. A flexible garden hose or rope can be used for the outer boundary and can be adjusted for smaller and smaller circles (figure 20).

To add variety, change the way the players must move within the space. Hop? Skip? Jump? Jump sideways? Backward?

Figure 20. Shocking squares.

Private Squares

In this game, the players stand on their own sections and follow the instructions you call out (figure 21). Everyone is so involved in their own movements, shy children and people with special needs feel free to be more internal and less self-conscious.

Possible instructions include:

- Stand on your own square and do something beautiful (or silly, mean, dumb, happy, strict, etc.).
- Stand like a sleeping stork, one leg up.
- Skip around your square.
- Stand on your square and switch feet. How many ways can you switch feet?

Figure 21. Private squares.

- Jump over your square from front to back (or side to side, or diagonally).
- Straddle the square, then jump on top of it. Reverse.
- Go around the square sideways, facing it. Do the same with your back to the square. Now switch from front to back (or back to front) as you go around.
- Touch your square with only an elbow and a knee (or ulnar and patella bone if you are teaching anatomy).
- Make a dance (for example, two jumps on the square, one jump forward, one back, and a hop to either side). The players choreograph their own patterns and then demonstrate their patterns to the group.)

Notice the different ways the children do these movements and, if it seems appropriate, point these out to the other students: "Roxanne has an interesting way of doing that. Let's all do it like her." You could also give an open-ended assignment: "Move on your section any way that you want." Then comment, "Let's all try Marissa's way," or "Let's all copy Jessica's idea."

Figure 22. Trusting squares.

Trusting Squares

Two players stand on their own newspaper sections and face each other, their palms facing forward and touching. (The sections are far enough apart that the players have to lean forward slightly.) The children are to push off with their hands and then fall forward again, catching each other with their outstretched palms (figure 22). They could also catch each other with their arms.

The farther apart the squares, the trickier this is. And then, of course, the players can try this with their eyes closed.

Human Basketball

The hoop is a child standing on a chair, holding a wastebasket. The idea is that this student can move the basket in the direction of

the shot to help teammates make a basket. (Some kids may move the basket away at the very last second to make their pals lose a shot, but that's another kind of game.)

Carrying Game

Lay newspaper sections down in a circle or in a path. Each section is occupied by one person, except the first section, which has two people on it. One person of this pair carries the other person to the next section. The person who had been carried now carries the next person to the next section, and so on, until everyone has had a turn carrying or being carried (figure 23).

If a smaller person must carry a larger person, the carrier may be able to carry only one leg, and the person being carried will have to do some hopping.

Variation: Put two people on each section, with three people on the first section. The two people doing the carrying form a seat with their arms to carry the third person.

Figure 23. Carrying game.

Human Pinball

Children form a circle, facing outward, with one person in the center. That player bends over and shoots a newspaper ball through the legs at someone's back. After being hit, that person then moves to the center of the circle and repeats the process. This game is good for balance and eye-hand coordination.

Cross-Over Dodgeball

Form two lines of players, facing each other. The children throw balls at players in the other line. When players are hit, they cross over to the other team.

One section of newspaper makes a soft ball that doesn't hurt. If there is any problem with people throwing the ball too hard and hurting others, increase the distance between the two lines.

3
Games to Play with Milk, Yogurt, and Ice Cream Cartons

Half-gallon milk cartons can accumulate quickly, and they work very well for games. (Activities that use plastic gallon milk jugs are described in Chapter 12, Games to Play with Other Ordinary Things.) Yogurt and pint ice cream containers and their lids are useful, too. And if people ask you why you are suddenly downing pints of Ben and Jerry's Chocolate Fudge Brownie ice cream, you can righteously reply that you are doing it only in the interest of recycling materials for games.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Giant Dice Jump

Cut the tops off of milk cartons, leaving the lower three-quarters of the carton intact. Fit one carton bottom into the other to make a cube. Cover the cubes with a light-colored paper, and mark them like dice (one dot on one side, two dots on another, and so on) (figure 24).

Make a list of motor activities such as jumping, hopping, skipping, leaping, turning, sliding, and so on. Each child chooses an activity, then throws the dice to find out how many times to do that activity.

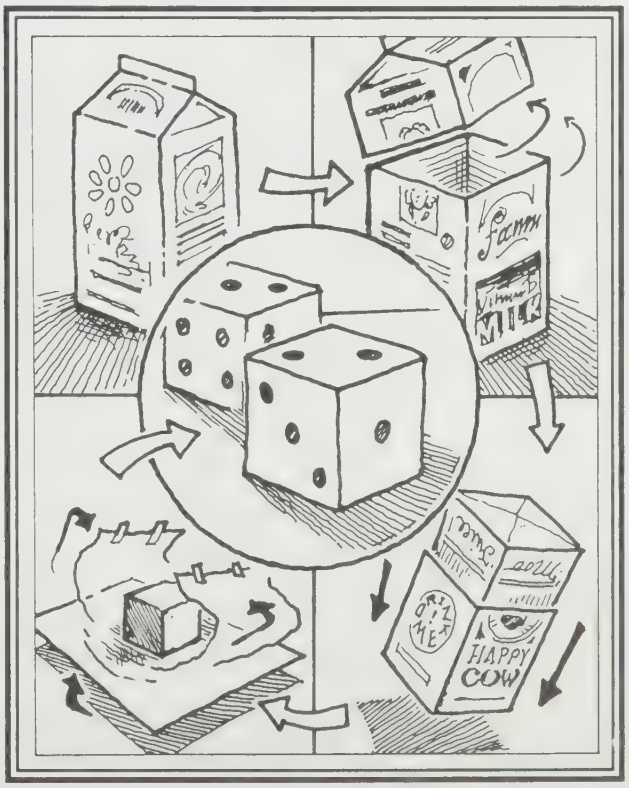


Figure 24. Giant dice.

Milk Carton Blocks

Following the instructions above for dice, make blocks of varying sizes by cutting off different lengths from the tops of the cartons.

Use these blocks for building walls and towers. Let one child construct a tower, or take turns adding a block to the construction. When it is all done, everyone gets to kick it down—of course! (The hard part for

If desired, you can make milk carton blocks prettier and more durable by covering them with wrapping paper or adhesive paper. However, while prettier milk cartons may impress other adults, the kids don't care. Worse, I once covered cartons with butcher paper and drew lovely little designs on them. I had fun drawing the designs, but I found that when the kids started playing roughly with the cartons, standing on them, kicking them—all the things I wanted them to do—it bothered me. I hated to see my pretty things get dirty! Useless attitude!!! I don't cover them anymore. The kids squash and kick them till the "cows come home" and I care not.

kids is waiting until the last carton is in place before kicking the tower down. Anticipation elicits excitement, excitement makes little legs itchy, and sometimes the tower is kicked prematurely. Oh well.)

Placing the blocks carefully, especially if building a tower, gives children experience with balancing. The more blocks, the bigger the tower or wall, and the greater the challenge (meaning that, with enough blocks, even older kids enjoy this one, especially when it gets to the point where one has to stand on a chair or stepladder to add the next block). And no matter what the age, there seems to be a thrill in making it "all fall down!"

Children can also knock down the milk carton structure with a beanbag, a ball, or anything else that is handy, including another milk carton block.

Progressive Jumps

The players start off jumping over one carton lying on its side. Another block is added and they jump over two; then another is added and they jump over three. Continue adding blocks until the jump is beyond the outer limits of everyone's jumping skills.

Then ask the players to stand a ways back from the cartons to get a good running start and to try leaping over the cartons. This game also promotes motor planning skills.

Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills

Slots

Construct a milk carton block as described above and cut a slot in the top as if it were a piggy bank. Then, from the side of another carton, cut strips narrow enough to fit into the slot and about ½″ in length (longer strips tend to bend). Have your player put the strips into the slot.

Variations:

Cut different widths of strips and make coordinating different-width slots for the child who is ready to see size variations (figure 25).

Cut circles in the block instead of slots, and have children use marbles or small beads. If the children are still mouthing things and are likely to put marbles and beads in their mouths, use larger objects (such as walnuts). For the child who is ready to work on shape discrimination, cut both circles and slots in the same block.

The Right Lids

If you have a variety of different types of yogurt and ice cream containers, you can have your player find the right lid to go on the matching container, practicing the fine-motor skill of putting things on and taking them off as well as the cognitive skill of matching.

Milk Carton Houses

Cut doors and windows in a milk carton. Tape two or more cartons together to make larger dwellings. Paint the house with thick tempera paint. Children can move miniature people and toys through the different doors and windows, making up a story to go along with the movements.

Figure 25. Slots.

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

Squish Carton Throw

Don't waste perfectly good squished cartons from the game of *Milk Carton Squish* (described below in **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination**)—use them to play a how-far-can-you-throw-it game. Mark a line and have players take turns throwing their cartons. Or make a longer line and let everyone throw at once (one-two-three, THROW!). Or do it both ways.

Point out a target. Outside, it might be a tree; in the gym, it could be a spot on the wall. Let the kids see how accurately they can aim their throws.

Container Drop

Open up the spout or the entire top of an empty milk carton. Let a child stand over the carton and drop objects into it.

The objects can vary according to what is readily available. Pebbles? Chalk? Pencils? Erasers?

You can also vary the height from which objects are dropped. Children can sit on a chair, stand on a desk or a stepladder, and so on.

It might be interesting for children to give themselves ten tries at each different height and chart the differences in their scores.

Figure 26. Circles in squares.

Circles in Squares

Cut out the sides of milk cartons to make flat rectangles. Cut these in half, then cut a large hole in the center of each square. The diameter of the hole should be slightly larger than a paper towel tube. Let your learner place the milk-carton square onto the tube (figure 26). (You can set the tube in an upright position by inserting it into a hole cut in an intact milk carton or a cereal box.) As the child becomes more proficient, make the holes smaller and use a dowel or a length of broomstick.

One Yogurt Toss

Use one yogurt container and a small, hard object, such as an eraser or a walnut. The player tosses the object into the air and catches it with the yogurt container. Have the player start with small tosses, and encourage the child to toss it higher and higher with each succeeding throw.

Figure 27. Two-handed toss.

Two Yogurt Toss

Use two yogurt containers (or cut the tops off two milk cartons, or use pint ice cream containers). Have the player toss a small, hard object from one container to the other. Again, the higher the toss, the greater the challenge.

Two-Handed Toss

The child tosses a small yogurt container from one hand to the other until confident enough to toss two containers from hand to hand at the same time (figure 27).

If you know how to teach juggling, add a third container to the repertoire. Yogurt containers won't roll away as easily as a ball, although scarves and other materials make it even easier for first-time jugglers.

Bracelet Toss

Make milk carton bracelets by slicing milk cartons as you would slice a pound cake. The resulting square-shaped bracelets can be tossed over any object such as a soft-drink bottle or a plastic shampoo bottle. Fill bottles with water to keep them standing upright.

Flying-Saucer Knock Down

This game requires empty yogurt and ice cream containers and their lids. Place the containers on the floor, upside down. Then have the player sit, stand, or squat a certain distance away and throw the lids like flying saucers to hit the containers.

Arrange the containers in a line or in a random pattern. The closer ones are easier to hit; the farther ones require more force.

Flying-Saucer Knock Down *was first showed to me by Alden, a home-schooled student who needed some work on his physical development because he spent so much of his energy and interest on his mental capabilities. He was so intelligent and original, I always had to remind myself that he was 7 and not 47. He was also in my drama/movement class and the children were taking turns miming. The others had to guess what one person was depicting. So far we had seen a monkey, a toaster, and an airplane—and then it was Alden's turn. He squiggled around on the floor for a long while with his hands connected over his head while we guessed snake, worm, string, and so on. We couldn't guess, and ultimately he had to tell us. He said, straight-faced, sincere, and a little surprised that we hadn't gotten it, "I am being a sperm."*

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Jump in the Spaces

Stand milk cartons in a row with a space between each one. The game is to jump over each carton individually to the end of the line. Have children jump sideways and backward, too, then ask them to hop over each carton.

This game also requires some motor planning.

Wide-Legged Jump

This is a good activity for beginning jumpers who do not yet have the coordination to jump over the cartons but can do a type of slide and shuffle jump beside them. This activity gives children a sense of jumping and requires them to notice where their feet are in relation to the cartons.

Lay the cartons in a long row and have the player use a wide-gait position to jump down the row with the cartons between the jumper's feet (figure 28).

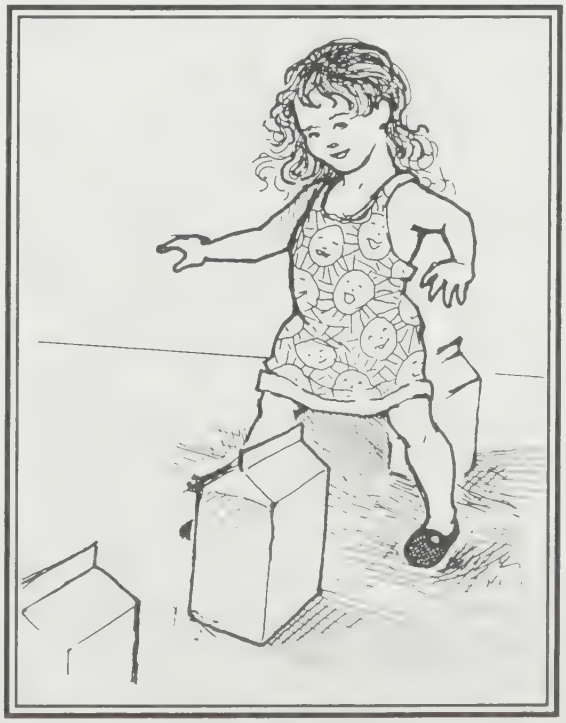


Figure 28. Wide-legged jump.

Jumping Blocks

Glue four to eight milk cartons together to form a large block, and cover them with paper to make sure they stay together. Use several of these blocks in obstacle courses for participants to jump, crawl, or leap over, depending on the age and skill level of the players.

Milk Carton Squish

Instead of a path of milk cartons that children jump *over,* make a path of cartons that children can jump *on!*

Jumping with full force and squashing one carton after another will win the hearts of many a young child.

Stand and Kick

See under **Games to Enhance Laterality.**

Milk Carton Soccer

See under **Games to Enhance Laterality.**

Games to Enhance Spatial Sense

Figure 29. Walking maze.

Walking Maze

Make a maze out of milk cartons and have players walk through the maze several times with their eyes open. Then have them try it with their eyes shut or blindfolded and see if they can build an internal sense of where the cartons are in space (figure 29).

Arrows

Cut out small arrows from the sides of milk cartons. (You can get one or two arrows from each side of a carton.) For younger children, make larger arrows. Give three or more arrows to each participant, including yourself. Make a pattern with your arrows (for example, two outer arrows could point to each other and the middle arrow could point up). Ask the students to make their arrows look exactly like yours.

If this task is too easy, make your pattern, cover it with a scarf, and ask the students to duplicate it from memory.

If the first task is too difficult, have a child put arrows on top of yours.

The more arrows you use and the more varied the pattern, the greater the challenge.

Games to Enhance Laterality

Stand and Throw

Cut the tops off some cartons and stand them up in a row facing the player. The player throws a small, hard object (such as a walnut) into the cartons.

You can increase the chances of success by clustering a few cartons together instead of lining them up single file. Place the cartons to the right or left of the player if you want to strengthen a specific side.

Container Drop
Flying-Saucer Knock Down

See details in the section on **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.** Both of these games work on arm strength and grip release (finger extension).

Stand and Kick

Line up a row of cartons; have the player walk along and kick the cartons down, one by one. This game is especially good for children who have weakness on one side and need work on strengthening and balancing.

Milk Carton Soccer

Children use a milk carton like a ball, kicking the carton from one end of the room to the other. Use two standing cartons, slightly separated, for the goal posts.

Use any type of container to make a series of goals at which the players can aim. The children must "dribble" the carton from one goal to the other. Arrange some goals with containers that are far apart (and easier to hit); set containers closer together to make the goal more challenging (figure 30).

This game can be played by a single player or by two teams of players. Set up goals on both ends of the field.

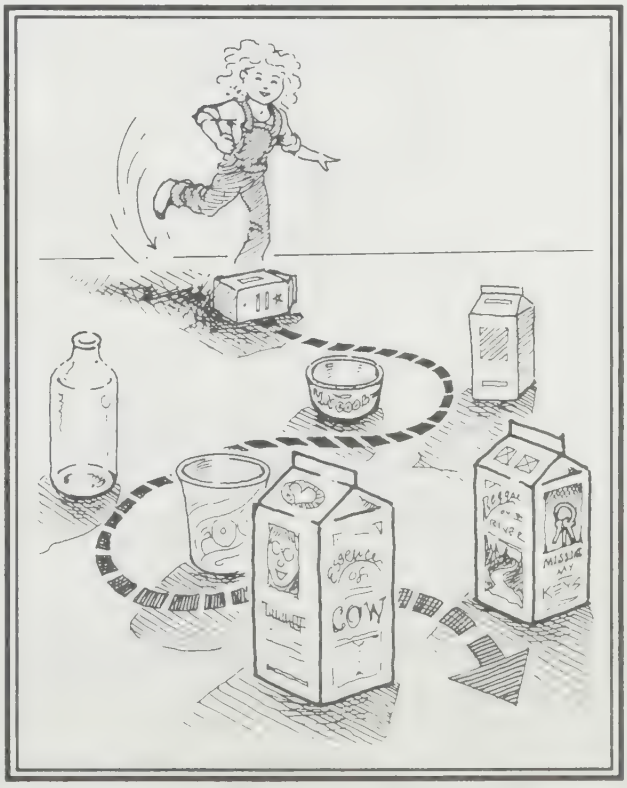


Figure 30. Milk carton soccer.

Kick Around

Set up a row of milk cartons, each carton about one foot from the next. The players kick yogurt containers around the cartons in a slalom fashion from one end of the line to the other.

This game also works on eye-foot coordination and balancing.

Hopping Around

Set up two parallel rows of four milk cartons each. Have the players hop in a circle around each carton, going from a carton in one row to a carton in the other row, and back again. If the rows are close together, it takes tighter control to hop around a carton without knocking another one down. If the lines are farther apart, it takes more strength and endurance to go from one row to the other.

Games to Enhance Balance

Milk Carton Path

Lay cartons on their sides and have the player step from carton to carton. The fact that the cartons squish or jiggle when walking on them adds to the balancing challenge.

Figure 31. Milk carton tower path.

Milk Carton Tower Path

This is similar to *Milk Carton Path,* above, except that the cartons are set upright (figure 31). The cartons tend to squish and jiggle more in this position, so the player might need a steadying hand. Try not to offer too much support, to let the player do most of the balancing alone.

Shoe Shuffle

Turn cartons into shoes for small feet by cutting out one of the sides. See how fast your player can move in these shoes, or make a path for the child to follow.

Balancing Walk

Use milk cartons for the ever-faithful "balancing a book on your head" activity: how many milk cartons can you balance on your head? Start with one and add on while the player is standing still.

Start over with one carton and see how far the player can walk before it falls off. Can the child get that far balancing two cartons?

Balancing Stand

If you stuff milk cartons with newspapers as tightly as possible, they are sturdy enough to stand on. Put two of these blocks on the floor and have a player stand on them. Then add two more to form a second layer, putting them crossways to the first two to make a sturdier foundation. Add on as many more layers as skill levels allow.

Games to Enhance Motor Planning

Milk Carton Jump

Stand milk cartons in a row like a miniature wall facing the player. Ask the child to run and leap over them or to stand in front of them and jump over them. Keep adding more cartons to the wall, increasing its height.

Milk Carton Leap

Lay the milk cartons down next to each other to form a long line to leap over. Start with just a few and keep adding more to increase the length of the line.

Games to Enhance Rhythm and Imagination

Milk Carton Block Percussion Sounds

Cut off the tops of milk cartons and fit the bottom ends together. Make different-sized blocks by varying the height at which you cut off the top. (You could also use smaller milk or cream containers such as pints or half-pints.)

Instead of using these blocks for building, put different objects inside each block (such as stones, pennies, bells, popcorn, bottle caps, buttons, gravel, beans, rice, salt, sand, and so on). Ask the players to identify the objects inside each block.

Make two of each type of sound-block; shake one of the sound-blocks and ask a player to find the matching sound-block.

Use the different sounds of these blocks to make music. For beginners, make loud and soft sounds by varying the force and speed of the shaking.

Ask older players to imagine what animal their block sound reminds them of. Perhaps the one filled with pennies makes them think of birds; the one with stones sounds more like elephants. Ask each player to make up a rhythmic shaking of the blocks to go with the animal idea. Birds might inspire a 2/4 rhythm and elephants a 1/2 beat.

Games to Enhance Group Playing

Giant Dice

Make dice as suggested in *Giant Dice Jump* (in the section on **Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills** in this chapter).

Seat the participants in a circle; each takes a turn throwing the dice to see who gets the highest number. Instead of rolling the dice, however, the children toss them up in the air, giving a spin to them if they are able, and let them fall in the center of the circle.

Change the rules occasionally such that the person with the lowest number wins. Other times, let the players have three turns each and add up their score. The highest (or lowest) score wins. (This is a painless way to practice addition skills!)

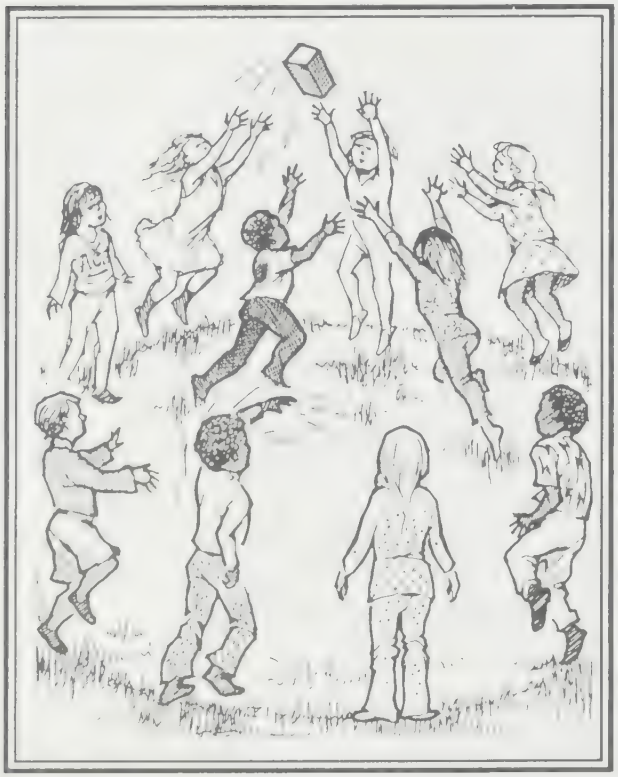


Figure 32. Hot box.

Hot Box

This is a game of "keep-away." Certain people in the group are the throwers and others are the interceptors. The throwers make a circle around the interceptors and throw the milk carton to other throwers (figure 32). The interceptors try to intercept the carton by catching it. The person who successfully intercepts a pass then changes places with a thrower.

Drop Box

This is a game of paying attention. Everyone in the group has a milk carton; one person is designated before each game as the dropper. When this player drops the carton, the others must drop their cartons immediately. The first (or last) person to catch on to what is happening can be the dropper for the next drop.

Soccer

Children play a regular game of soccer, with one team trying to kick a carton from one side of the room to the other while the others are trying to move the carton in the opposite direction. You can place two cartons on each side of the room to mark the goals.

Carton Boxing

Children are paired off and given their "boxing gloves"—opened milk cartons pulled on over their hands. As players spar, suggest strongly that punches should be pulled!

Bat the Carton

Kelvin and Tyler of my movement class came up with this activity. They batted the carton back and forth to each other with their hands as if it were a volleyball. As they became more confident, they elaborated on the rules to say that each person had to bat the carton twice to himself; on the third hit, they would bat it to the other person.

Block the Container

Annie, another student in my class, thought of this game. Two people stand facing each other, holding hands, while the others line up as if everyone were about to play a game of "London Bridge." However, the players in line are holding ice cream containers and are trying to throw them over or under the "bridge" (connected arms) while the two people forming the bridge try and block the throw (figure 33). The game moved along well and was not too difficult nor too easy for the students.

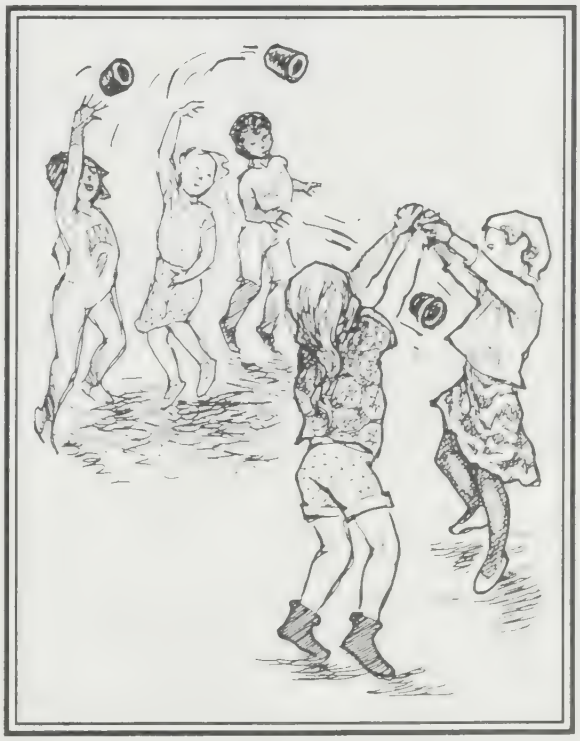


Figure 33. Block the container.

Milk Carton Fence

Ask the children to build a common wall with milk carton blocks, making it as wide and as tall as possible. Each child takes a turn to add to the wall. When you say, "go," they all run at the wall, knocking it down (the fun part!).

Mountain Jumps

Place one carton or a pile of cartons in the middle of the room. Have the players run and jump over them as if the cartons were a huge mountain and they were huger giants.

It is really satisfying to have the other players yell out the jumper's name just as the child is clearing the mountain top!

Yogurt Tower

One day I was doing a workshop for a community college class using yogurt containers, lids, and walnuts. We had been throwing, catching, jumping, hopping, running, even singing and pretending for almost two hours. As we sat, exhausted, in a goodbye circle, I asked if anyone could come up with yet another game.

Gail, an artist, put a container upside down in the middle of the circle and challenged the rest of us to add a container or a lid, one at a time, to build a tower that wouldn't fall over. We went around the circle, each person adding something to the increasingly precarious tower. Each time the tower got higher and still stayed stable, we collectively sighed in appreciation. What was particularly nice was that when one person finally added the container that caused the tower to topple, everyone spontaneously clapped, and instead of feeling bad, this player felt good.

Another plus for this game is that it can be played by a group of people with a wide variety of skill levels or when everyone is too tired to move but they are still up for playing just one more game.

4
GAMES TO PLAY WITH GARDEN HOSE AND PLUMBING PIPE

Basic Equipment

Homemade Hoops

Make your own hoops with plastic ¾″ PVC pipe from any building supply store. Cut off eight- or nine-foot sections. Use a ¾″ plastic coupling or a piece of doweling to connect the ends and form them into circles (figure 34).

A 10- to 11-foot length makes a gigantic circle for children to run through (see *Round Runner* under **Games to Enhance Motor Planning**).

Ringers

Make small hoops from 10″ to 15″ lengths of flexible garden hose. Connect the ends with appropriate-sized doweling.

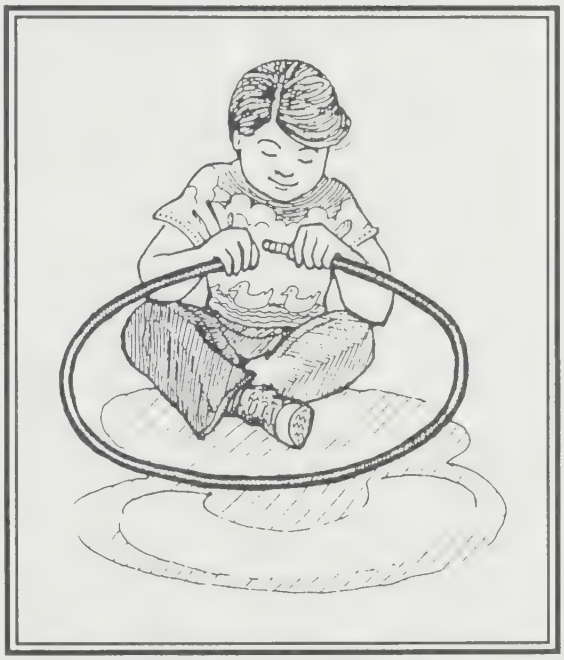


Figure 34. Homemade hoops.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Hoop Movements

Lay the hoops down in a variety of patterns (see figure 35). Each pattern can inspire a different set of movements.

Examples:

- In the first diagram of figure 35, where the hoops are in a circle, the players can jump or hop in each circle, or alternate between jumping in one and hopping in the next. The students could also do a different movement in each circle, such as twirling, jumping backward or forward, or hopping/jumping sideways.

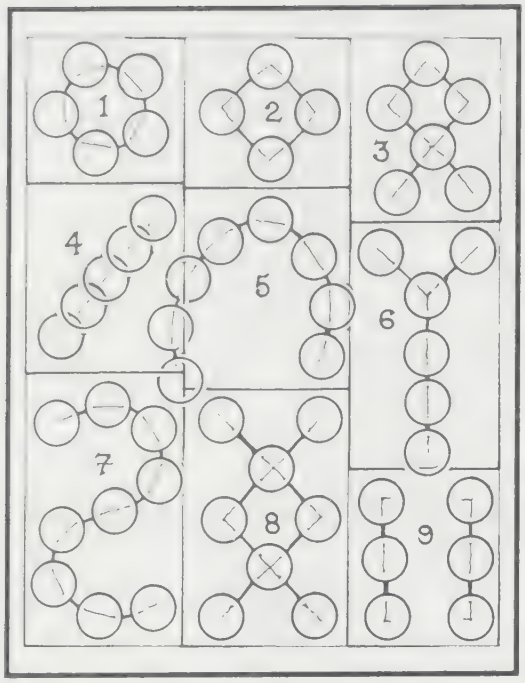


Figure 35. Patterns for hoop movements.

- When the hoops are laid in the form of a square, as in the second illustration, the players could be encouraged to jump sideways and backward, and to make one-quarter pivot turns before each jump as they change direction.
- The third layout is similar to a hopscotch pattern where the players jump in the double hoops and hop in the single ones, both forward and backward. This is also a good pattern for encouraging children to make up their own movements.
- In the fourth illustration, players tiptoe from one small space to another, or hop in the large spaces and tiptoe in the small ones. For added challenge, have them try it sideways with a cross-over step.

Use patterns five through nine for additional movement ideas.

Leaping Lizards

The hoops are laid out in a straight line with one hoop at the end separated from the others by a few feet. The distance between the hoops depends on the size of the leapers. The idea is for the players to see how fast they can leap from one hoop to the next, run around the last hoop, and run back home (figure 36). The next player begins when the player in front is a few hoops ahead.

Figure 36. Leaping lizards.

Instead of creating the image of lizards leaping from rock to rock, tell players they are frogs jumping from lily pad to lily pad.

Eggbeater Hoop

Spin a hoop like an eggbeater (perpendicular to the floor) and see how many times children can run around it before it stops spinning (Figure 37).

Hoop Variety

Lay out a series of hoops, and in each one put a different object that requires some sort of movement to operate. For example, if a bell, a jump rope, a ball, and two beanbags were placed in the hoops, the first round could require a player to ring the bell twice, jump rope three times, bounce

the ball four times, and throw the two beanbags in the air at the same time, catching them both (or at least trying!). The second round could require the same actions, but the activity is timed to see if children can do the routine faster. Alternatively, give new instructions for each piece of equipment.

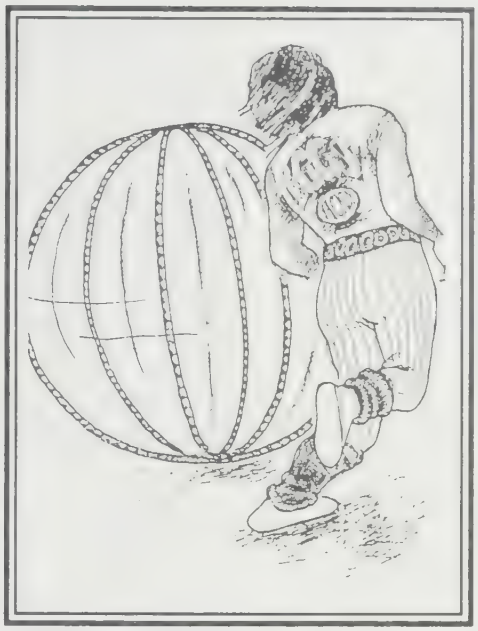


Figure 37. Eggbeater hoop.

Mini-Hurdles

This lightweight, homemade equipment, made out of white PVC pipe, is so versatile that therapists can work with a range of children from two to 12 years of age and use mini-hurdles as the only equipment (figure 38). Jumping, leaping, hopping, and crawling over and under hurdles is wonderful for enhancing children's gross motor strength, eye-foot coordination, motor planning, motor control, laterality, and rhythmic sense. Different skills are enhanced depending on how the hurdles are placed—upside down, sideways, or right side up.

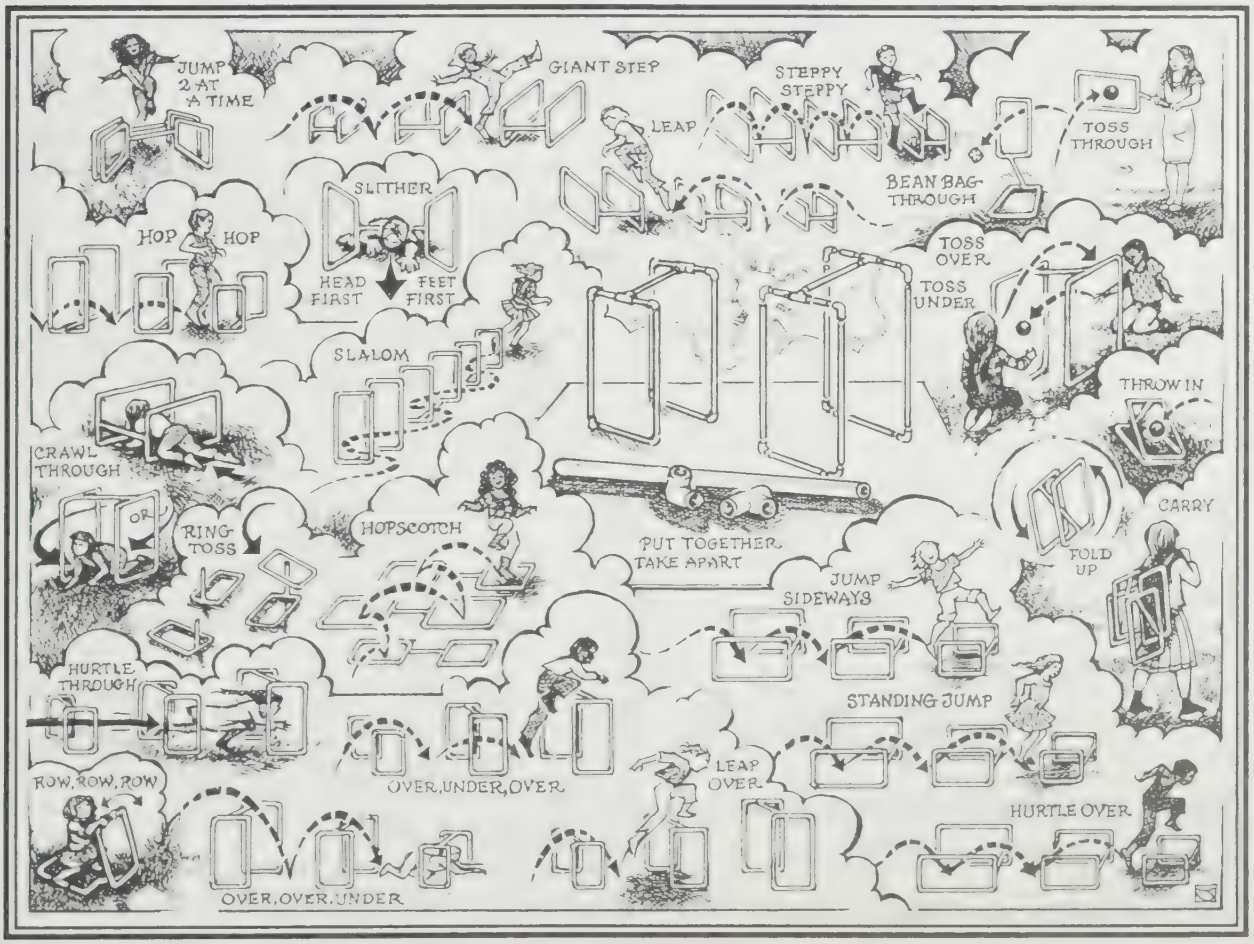


Figure 38. Activities with mini-hurdles.

For example, if the hurdles are placed upside down with the center bar on the floor, children can hop over them. Three hurdles can become a slalom course requiring spatial awareness.

With the hurdles on their sides, children can jump forward, backward, and sideways over the center bar. Laid down flat, the hurdles can form the design for hopscotch-like jumping and hopping.

Even the simple act of crawling takes on different dimensions depending on which way the mini-hurdles are positioned. One position encourages the players to make themselves as narrow as possible, another as flat as possible. One conformation requires players to slither through, getting even flatter still.

Hurdles can also be used for eye-hand coordination games by becoming targets. You can take them partially apart and play ring toss through the rectangles, or set them up behind each other for a three-dimensional throwing experience.

Let your students take the hurdles completely apart, and they will be only too glad to come up with a totally new way of putting the pipes back together.

Mini-hurdles are not difficult to make. PVC pipe can be cut with a kitchen knife, and local hardware stores carry all the pipe and joints that are needed. Figure 39 shows how the pipes fit together; the dimensions for various-sized hurdles are given below. Hurdles can be made in a variety of heights to suit your client's individual needs.

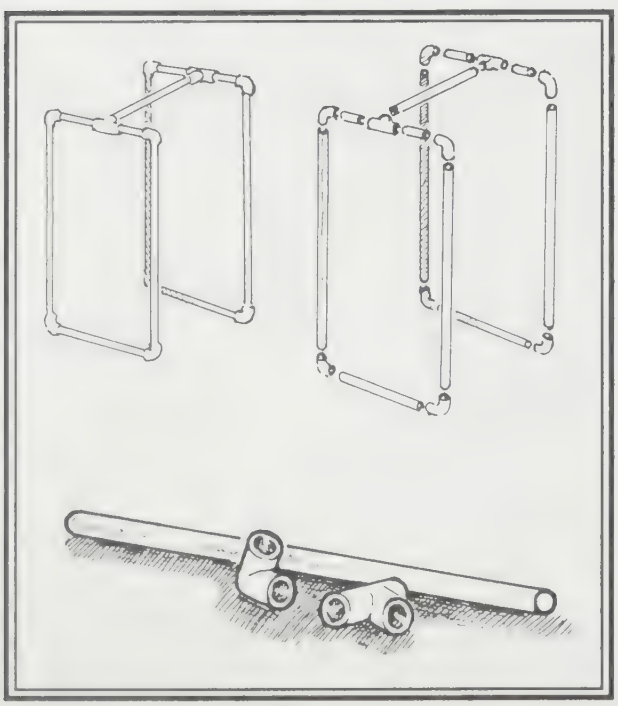


Figure 39. Constructing mini-hurdles.

For a set of mini-hurdles that are 11″, 15″, and 19″ high, you'll need to cut the following lengths of PVC pipe:

4 pieces 7¾″ (for 11″ hurdle)
4 pieces 11¾″ (for 15″ hurdle)
4 pieces 15¾″ (for 19″ hurdle)
12 pieces 3½″ (each hurdle needs four pieces)
6 pieces 8½″ (each hurdle needs two pieces)
3 pieces 16″ (this is for the center bar)
24 elbow joints (¾″) (eight per hurdle)
6 "T" joints (2¾″) (two per hurdle)

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

Bat Catch

With rolled-up newspapers for a bat (use many layers of newsprint to make it firm) and the garden-hose ringers described earlier, play a game in which one player holds the bat stationary and another player tries to ring the bat with the ringers. Alternatively, one player can toss the ring while the other player tries to spear it with the bat.

Hoop Ball

Have one person hold a large hoop while two other people throw a ball back and forth to each other through the hoop.

This is a good game for beginning throwers because it gives them visual clues on where to aim the ball.

If you want to get a little fancier, have the hoop holder move the hoop up and down to add the element of timing and rhythm.

Twirling Hoop Ball

A variation on *Hoop Ball,* above, is to suspend the hoop by a string from a plant hook or other overhead fixture, then set it twirling or swinging just before the player is ready to throw. Talk about timing. . . .

Bounce Ball

One person holds the hoop on the ground and the other players bounce a ball through the hoop to each other. The hoop holder gradually lifts the hoop and the players must adjust their bounces by varying the distance or the strength with which they bounce the ball.

Hoop Batter

Hang a hoop from a tree limb or a clothes line, or have someone hold the hoop in the air between the thrower and the batter (figure 40). An inflated balloon is tossed through the hoop to the batter, who bats it back through the hoop with a newspaper bat (sheets of newspaper rolled lengthwise and taped tightly). Playing baseball with a balloon is a guaranteed winner for beginners.

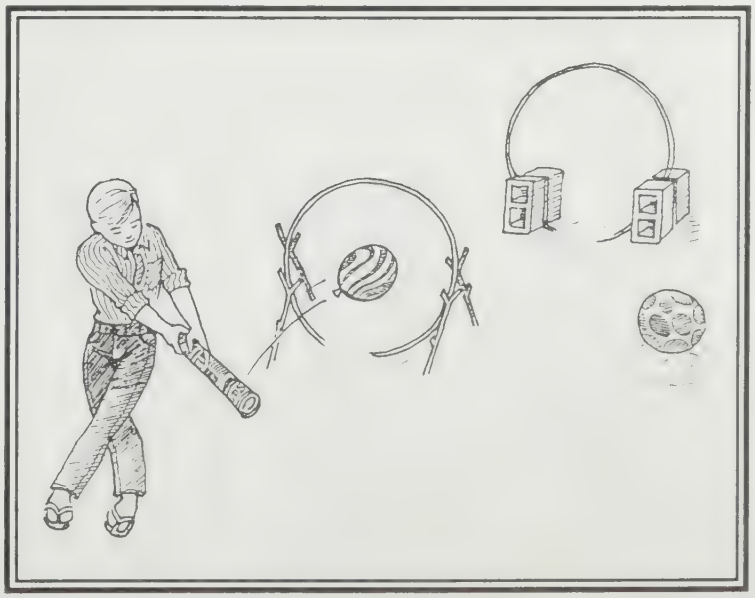


Figure 40. Hoop batter.

Badminton Hoop

Use badminton rackets and a birdie, and play the game with a hoop instead of a net.

Ring People Toss

Children take turns being a pole while the thrower tosses the large hoops over the player's taut body. The children who are being the poles can protect their faces by turning their backs to the thrower (this position also adds an element of surprise), or they can cover their faces with their hands. They can also extend their height by holding their arms together stiffly over their heads.

Because players take turns being poles, they learn to throw gently at their fellow players—they may be the next pole.

Ring Chair Toss

This is the same as *Ring People Toss,* above, except that chairs are used as the target instead of people. This is a good option if your group is a little too rough or uncoordinated for *Ring People Toss.*

Hoop Croquet

Use a newspaper bat as a croquet mallet, an inflated balloon as a ball, and large hoops as wickets. If it is too difficult to keep the hoops vertical (see figure 41 for ideas), lay them flat. Players must get the balloon into the hoop (not across it) before going on to the next wicket.

This game can also be played like golf. Start the players a good distance from the hoop and see how many times they have to "drive" the balloon with the "club" before it makes it into the hoop "hole."

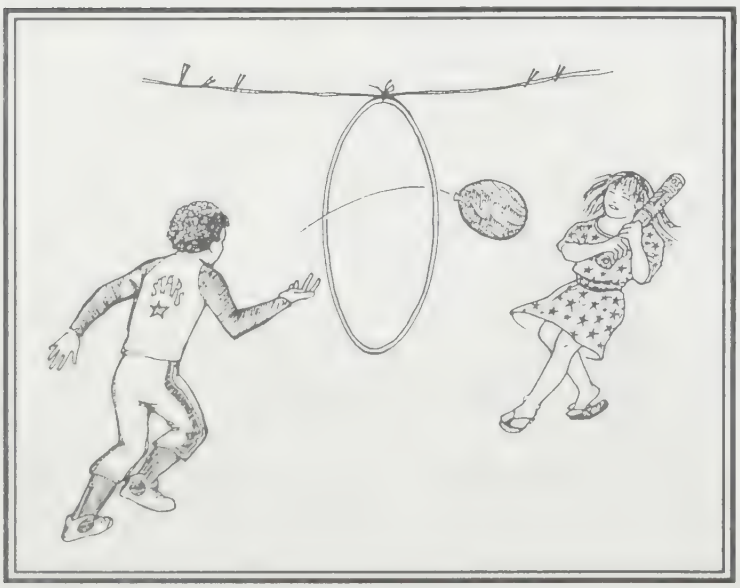


Figure 41. Hoop croquet.

Hoop Toss

Have a player toss a hoop up and catch it using both hands, then one hand. Suggest that the child make it twirl in the air when it is tossed. Ask children to try and ring an arm for a catch, then try for a leg.

Take a Hoop Walk

In the spirit of the '90s (1890s, that is), children take the hoop for a walk by moving it along beside them with a stick.

Hanging Hoop

Hang a hoop from a tree limb or a ceiling hook and have your learner fly paper airplanes through it.

Ringer Toss

Stick a dowel in the ground or embed a firm newspaper bat in a bucket of sand or rocks and have the children toss the rings onto the dowel.

Ringer Catch

A simple game of catch using ringers is easier for small, inexperienced hands than catching balls. Have a few ringers ready so that when your partner misses one, another is instantly ready without a break in the game or confidence level. After all ringers have been used, you both can gather them up, ring them on your arm like so many bracelets, and start the game of catch and throw again.

Hand Ringer

Instead of catching the ringer, one player aims a ringer at another player's arm (figure 42).

Figure 42. Hand ringer.

Airplane Fly

Ringers are just about the size of a pilot's steering wheel. Teach your player the basic dynamics of steering a plane (that is, when you pull the wheel toward you, the plane flies higher and the trees get smaller; when you push the wheel away, the plane flies lower and the trees get bigger). Act this out with your movements.

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Hoop Kick

Roll a hoop toward a player who is standing sideways to the oncoming hoop. When it approaches, the player kicks the side of the hoop with the side of the foot (figure 43). If this is done correctly (and it doesn't take much practice to get it right), the hoop will fly up into the air. The person who rolled the hoop should be able to catch it easily. This is really fun for everyone!

Figure 43. Hoop kick.

Moving Circle Hoop

Have children join hands to form a circle, with two children joining hands through a large hoop. When the music starts, players begin to step through hoop to the left, one by one. The object is to see how many times the team can move the hoop around the circle (or move the circle of players through the hoop) before the music stops.

You could divide the class into different teams to have them compete against each other, or ask each team to keep trying for their team's personal best time.

Variation: Use more than one hoop for each circle. How many more hoops? Let your sense of fun and the skill level of the players guide your decision.

Figure 44. Tiptoe hoop maze.

Tiptoe Hoop Maze

Lay a few hoops on the ground so that they overlap each other slightly. Players tiptoe from one open space to the next without stepping on the hoops (figure 44). The more hoops used, the more difficult the task. Have two or more people hold hands or waists and tiptoe through the spaces. The more people who go at the same time, the trickier the walk.

Broad-Jump Hoop

Lay a hoop on the ground and ask a player to jump over the whole hoop in broad-jump style. This game is obviously for the longer-legged group. If players can jump one hoop, lay out a line of hoops for a series of broad jumps. Be sure to allow sufficient space between the hoops for landing.

Games to Enhance Spatial Sense

Race Car Hoops

Players hold the hoops like steering wheels (figure 45); they rev up and start zooming! The idea is to go as fast as possible without crashing into another car.

The smaller the space, the more the players learn the necessity of finding the empty spaces to move into.

Note: Telling the children, "Don't bang into other cars" seems to invite trouble (children often don't hear the "Don't" part of the sentence). If you say, "Go into the empty spaces," it gives them a definite positive suggestion.

Players can link up with other players by flipping their hoops over the person in front of them and forming a line. The front person holds the hoop flat like a steering wheel of a bus. Everyone stays together and goes for a drive.

Figure 45. Race car hoops.

Tunnel Walk

Hold hoops up on their sides and have children walk through them as if through a tunnel. The game is especially good for toddlers who are discovering how big they are and what they can fit through. Hoop holders can be willing adults or children.

Figure Eight

Lay two hoops out at a slight distance from each other and show players how to go around them in a figure-eight pattern. This is hard for little ones just developing a spatial sense, but it is a good way to help them learn.

If the players are getting good at this activity or are older, add extra challenges such as doing it as fast as possible, doing it running backward, doing it while bouncing a ball, and so on.

Games to Enhance Laterality

Hoop Toss

This activity, described in **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination,** is helpful in that it can be played with the weaker hand (to strengthen it) or with the stronger arm (to make it even more coordinated).

Hoop Kick

Described in **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination,** this activity encourages the player to balance on the weaker leg and kick with the stronger, thus strengthening the weaker leg when the child is balancing on it. The reverse, standing on the stronger leg and kicking with the weaker, improves the child's accuracy with the weaker leg.

Ringer Games

Ringers are easy to catch and throw, and any activity using this equipment is excellent practice for laterality skills.

Games to Enhance Balance

Figure 46. Foot hoop.

Foot Hoop

Players twirl a hoop on one foot (figure 46). Ask them to try this while walking. Try it with the other foot. Have players toss hoops to partners to catch on feet or with hands.

Snake Walk

Lay out a length of garden hose so it has a series of loops (the way it would look if it were a series of cursive *e*'s). The trick is for the players to walk from one loop to another without stepping on the snake!

Games to Enhance Motor Planning

Rolling Runner

Players roll hoops and see if they can run faster than the hoops to a designated spot.

Have them try rolling with both right and left hands.

Sometimes give the hoop a head start—how long a head start can vary with skill level.

Another variation is to give the hoop a start, then run up to and around the hoop before it falls over.

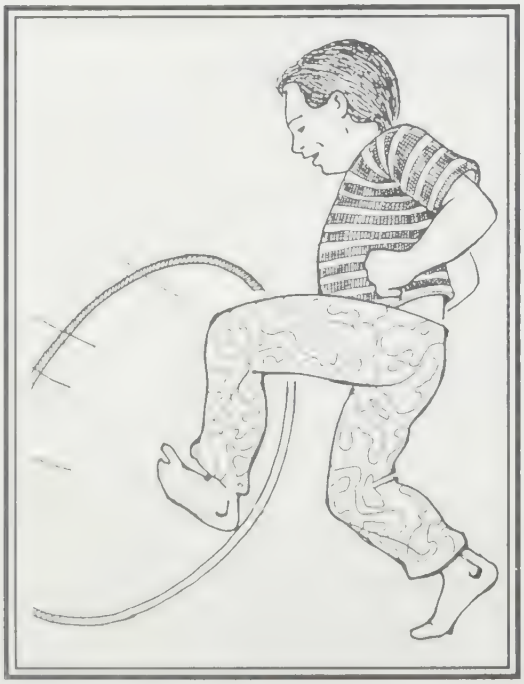


Figure 47. Hoop overs.

Hoop Overs

One player rolls the hoop toward a partner who jumps up and over it as it approaches (figure 47).

Round Runner

This is a three-player game. Two players roll a large hoop back and forth between them. The third player stands to the side as if they were all playing jump rope and the third person were

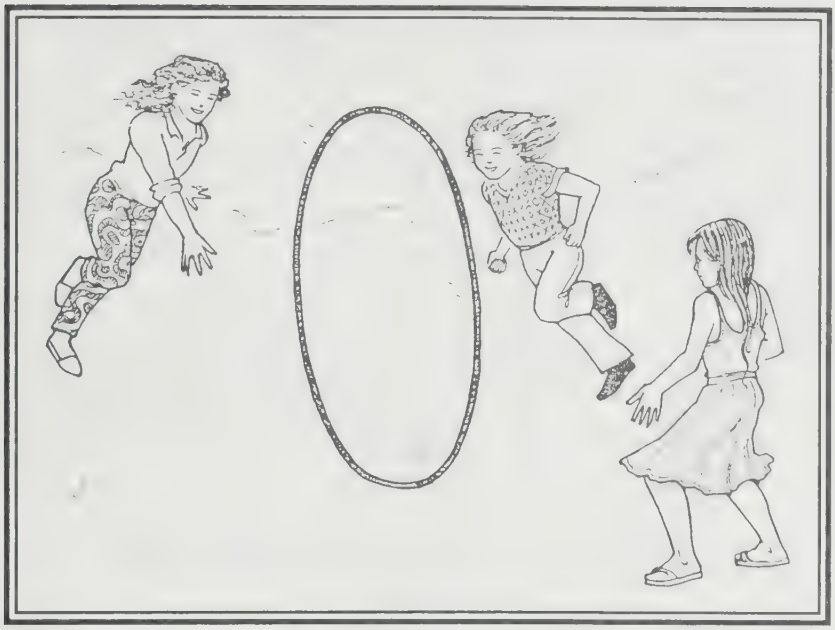


Figure 48. Round runners.

about to run in and jump. Instead, the third player tries to run *through* the hoop without touching the side or disrupting its path to the other person (figure 48). Timing is everything.

Variation: Put an exercise mat on the far side of the hoop. Instead of jumping through the moving hoop, the runner can dive through the hoop onto the waiting mat. (The more physically adventurous players particularly enjoy this fling-yourself-onto-space version of the game.)

Ridiculous Robots

Imagine a circular or linear obstacle course with one or more people on the path acting like robots, raising and lowering vertically-held hoops (figure 49). Remember miniature golf layouts, where flaps open and close, and you must get the ball through at just the right time? This is a similar concept except it is hoops that are being raised and lowered, and children must time their run so they go through the hoop when it is at its lowest point. The more players you have, the more people who can be robots.

Figure 49. Ridiculous robots.

The robots can synchronize their movements, or they can go crazy, each one going at a different speed, making their own version of what a robot sounds like switching gears.

Not crazy enough yet? Give each robot two hoops.

Figure 50. Round tag.

Round Tag

Place three hoops in a circle, far enough apart so that players must **leap** to get from one to the other. One person is "it" and must tag the other two people, but all three must always be in a hoop at all times (figure 50). The trick is for "it" to time the leap into the neighbor's hoop before the other players have a chance to leap out.

Put hoops closer together for younger players.

Eggbeater Hoop

See under **Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills.**

Games to Enhance Rhythm

Jump Hoop

Each person uses a hoop as a jump rope. The players hold on to the hoops in front of their bodies (this will be the pivot point of the hoop). They rotate the hoops over their heads, around, and down to their feet, where they jump or step over the hoops and bring them back up, over their heads, and down again in a rhythmic pattern.

Have them try jumping backward and jumping while moving.

Twirlers

See under **Games to Enhance Flexibility.**

Rolling Hoops

Two people face each other and roll a hoop back and forth. They can keep increasing the distance between them for added challenge.

The game can become even more complicated by giving each person two hoops to roll. Players can keep all hoops rolling at once, or roll one set of hoops at a time.

Children also enjoy rolling the hoops toward each other with the intention of having the hoops meet and crash together in the middle.

Another variation is to put obstacles (such as pillows, other hoops, shoes, and so on) in the pathway, and roll the hoops from one person to the other over the obstacles. When the hoops hits the obstacles, they behave in a most satisfying manner, sometimes jumping or changing course. The catcher must be alert and prepared to change directions in order to catch the hoop.

Keep players' interest high by switching to different variations of these hoop-rolling games. Introduce the next variation just when (or slightly before) interest in the current version begins to fade.

Games to Enhance Flexibility

Twirlers

Have children swing small rings made of garden hose in a circular motion on a finger, a wrist, or a foot.

Step Through

Have a child hold a large hoop horizontally in front, and challenge the player to try different methods of getting inside of the hoop (for example, step high into the hoop, sling a leg [abduct] over the hoop, or crawl in from underneath). Any other ways?

Move It Up

In this challenge, children step into hoops that are on the ground and attempt to get the hoops up and over their heads using only their feet.

Moving Circle Hoop

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination.**

Game to Enhance Imagination

Memory Maze

Lay the hoops on the ground in any pattern you desire. One person decides on the movement for the game: "Jump in the first hoop, swing your arms in the second, spin around in the third, hop backward on one foot, and whistle on the next." The players can make the movements as elaborate or as simple as they want (figure 51).

Variation: Instead of one person determining all the movements, each person adds an idea.

Figure 51. Memory maze

Example: The first player hops in the first hoop, then walks through the other hoops. The second person imitates the first person and hops in the first, decides to do a kick in the next, then walks through the rest. The third person does the hop in the first hoop, the kick in the second, adds a frog-like jump in the third, and walks through the rest. The game continues until all the hoops have a movement assigned to them and everyone has at least one chance to do all the movements.

Pipe Fittings

Collect a number of ½″ or ¾″ pipe fittings (that is, elbow joints, T-joints, and connectors). Cut up ½″ or ¾″ PVC pipe into varying lengths, and let the players put them together in whatever design strikes their fancy. You could also have one child name a shape and ask another child to construct it.

Connecting the pipes with the joints also requires hand and finger strength and manipulation.

Games to Enhance Group Playing

Racing Runner

Two players stand back-to-back inside a hoop—one facing forward, the other facing backward. They race against a similar odd couple (figure 52).

Partners should switch positions so that each has a turn to run backward. This way, they can each experience what it feels like to run

backward when the person in front is going too fast—a lesson in empathy that might help them modify their movements to take into consideration the comfort of the other player.

Figure 52. Racing runner.

Group Hoop

See *Moving Circle Hoop* under **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination.**

Musical Hoops

Players move around the room to music while you (or a helper; see below) issue various commands (skip, gallop, hop, run backward, slide, and so on). On the floor around the room are hoops which the players must go around or over while moving. When the music stops, players try to land in the hoops. The number of people allowed in each hoop depends upon the number of players and the number of hoops. If you want the group to feel friendlier, use more people per hoop with the stipulation that they all hold onto each other so that no one has any body part outside the hoop.

The "loser," the person who cannot reach or fit into a hoop, really is the winner because this person now chooses the next movement the players will do when the music starts. Encourage this player to take advantage of the privilege by making up idiosyncratic movements (for example, "the players have to jump around with one hand on their backsides and the other on their noses"). Encourage creativity, regardless of how absurd!

Shocking Ring

Lay a garden hose in a circle and have players in the center move to whatever directions they are given—hopping, skipping, jumping, and so forth. The main rule is that they are not to touch each other or the garden hose. If they touch either, they are shocked and fall down dead. The dead, then, make another obstacle to avoid because they are now electrified also. Whoever is left standing at the end of the game gets to call out the directions for the next game.

The following game can be even a greater challenge because the hose can be adjusted to make the circle smaller. The games following that one could have smaller circles.

Race Car Hoops

See under **Games to Enhance Spatial Sense.** Enclose an area on the floor with a garden hose and explain that the race cars cannot go outside of this space. The game can be an even greater challenge as the hose is adjusted to make the circle smaller.

Memory Maze

See under **Games to Enhance Imagination.** Use progressively smaller circles to add to the challenge.

Ridiculous Robots

See under **Games to Enhance Motor Planning.** Use progressively smaller circles to add to the challenge.

5
Games to Play with String, Rope, and Yarn

String and rope are as easy to find as the shoelaces in your jogging shoes, so here are a variety of games in which string or rope is the major or only ingredient. Yarn can be substituted for string if color is preferred.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Broad Jump

Mark a starting spot with string and ask your player to jump as far as possible from that string. Mark the landing point with another piece of taped string, and ask the child to try and jump past that string the next time. Continue as long as progress is made.

Partner Tug

Place a piece of string on the floor and have two people who are about the same size and strength stand facing each other across the string. Ask them to put their hands against each other, palm to palm, and when you say, "Go!" they are to push each other to see who can push the other out of the way and be the first to step over the line. Next ask them to link elbows and pull to see who can drag the other over the line first. Have the same sort of push or pull contest using these body parts:

- back to back
- fanny to fanny
- same as above except bending over and holding each other's hands
- hip to hip
- elbow to elbow
- with an arm under a leg, holding the other's hand (figure 53)
- any of the above while standing on one leg

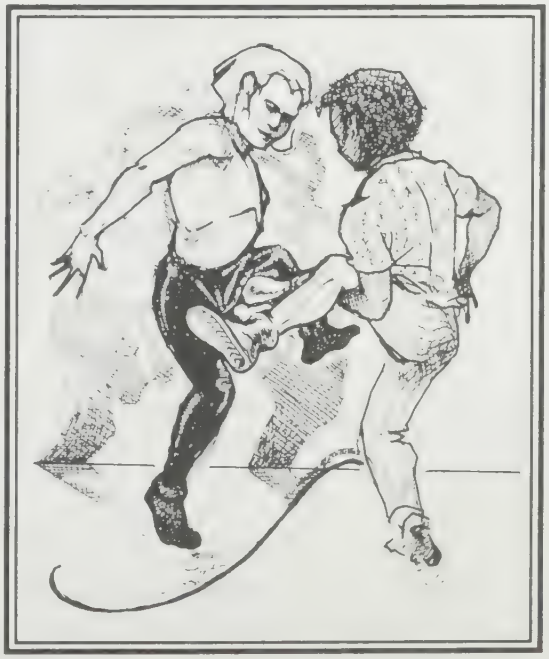


Figure 53. Partner tug.

The benefit of these different positions is that they require strength in different muscle groups, giving each person a chance to shine. Additionally, if the partners are evenly matched, it's exhilarating for them to have a chance to use their muscle strength to the full extent.

Reel in Fish

One person, the "fish," wears gloves and holds onto a rope; the other person pulls the rope, hand over hand, reeling in the "fish." Instead of a human fish, you can also use heavy objects such as chairs or books, depending on the strength of the person doing the fishing.

Races

Use string to mark the beginning and end of a race course and have a variety of races:

- toe races—walking on tiptoes only
- heel races—walking on heels only
- a rhythmic variation of them both, such as toe toe, heel heel, toe toe, heel heel
- squat race
- walking on the outside edges of the feet
- running or walking backward
- sliding sideways
- gallop race (right or left leg leading)
- hopping
- hopping backward

Beginner's Jump Rope

Teach beginners how to jump rope by dividing the task into two steps, the swing and the jump. Begin by having the child bring the rope up overhead and down, then stop the rope in front of the feet. Then have the child jump over the rope. Continue until the jumper can do both actions in a continuous motion.

A thick, rather heavy rope will swing with ease for beginners. A lighter rope with knots in the middle will swing to the floor without tangling.

Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills

Puzzle

Cut a small square in the middle of a piece of cardboard. Tie a chopstick to each end of a piece of string. Put one chopstick through the hole (figure 54). Ask the player to get the string and chopsticks free from the hole.

Untangle

Use those small muscles to untangle something. For the beginner, use a rope tied in a simple, loose knot. For the more advanced, use string or yarn.

Knots

Learn how to make simple sailor knots and teach them to your students using a thin nylon rope. Bowline knots are especially fun and a useful life-long skill.

String Painting

Children press a piece of string onto a thick pad of paper toweling soaked with paint. They then fold the toweling over the string and pull it out to make a piece of colored string.

Figure 54. Puzzle.

- Make many colors of string and wrap them carefully around a can smeared with glue, one string at a time, until the whole can is covered.
- Paste the string(s) on a piece of cardboard or a plastic foam tray to make a picture.
- Lay the damp strings on a piece of white paper and press another piece of paper on top. When the papers are pulled apart and the string is removed, the colored design turns plain paper into pretty stationery.

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

Throw Game

Tape down a string to mark the spot where the player stands (the foul line, as it were). Lay out five other strings a distance away in parallel rows, perpendicular to the player. The distance from the foul line depends on the skill level of your thrower. The player stands on the foul line and throws a beanbag or a newspaper ball as far as possible, trying to land it on or between the strings. If you want to keep score, you can assign each line a number. For example, if the player throws three balls and the first one lands between 3 and 4, that throw is awarded 3 points; if the second lands between 4 and 5, it gets four points; and if the third one lands on string number 4, it receives 4 points, for a total of 11 points altogether. Each time you play the game, your player can try to improve the score.

Keeping points is also a way to help your player see personal improvement. "Remember when you started therapy sessions, you were only able to get _____ points? Now you're getting _____ points easily!"

Figure 55. Pencil catch.

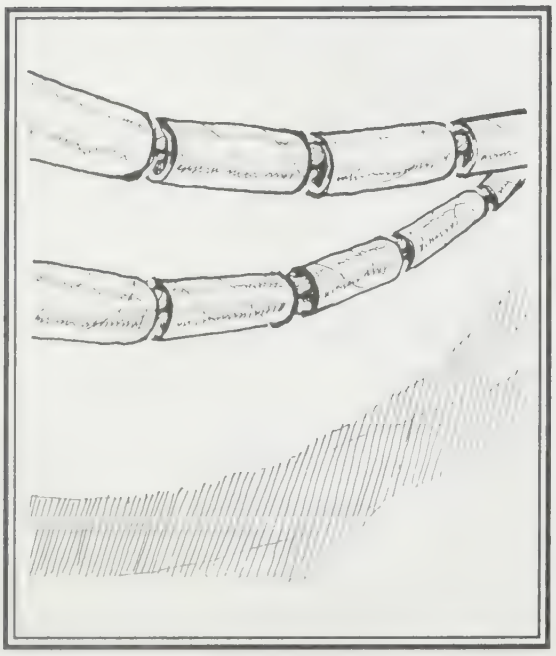


Figure 56. Beading.

Pencil Catch

Tie a pencil to a canning jar ring or a plastic lid from which you have cut out the center. Have your player swing the ring or lid rim and try to catch the ring on the pencil (figure 55). Make sure the string is long enough to allow the ring to be flipped over the pencil easily. You can make this progressively harder by using many different sizes of lids; for example, start with a two-pound coffee can lid and progress to baking powder lids or nut can lids.

Beading

Encourage success for beginning beaders with this bilateral activity by using a thick string or rope as a bead string. Use different objects for stringing, depending on the person's ability. Start with a short piece of rope and canning rings, empty toilet paper rolls, or cut-up paper towel tubes as beads (figure 56). (Cover the tubes with paper if you want to make them pretty.) Progress to string and diaper pins, egg carton sections, shower curtain rings, large paper clips, hardware washers, or cut-up straws. Stiffen the threading end with tape, wax, or glue to make stringing easier.

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Tightrope Walk

Have players walk on a rope on the floor as if it were a balance beam, heel/toe. Have them walk backward, too.

Curvy Tightrope

Make the rope curvy for more eye-foot practice.

Twirling Snake

Hold one end of a rope, stand in the center of a circle, and have children stand at the perimeter. Do a 360-degree turn, swinging the rope close to the floor, so that the children must jump over the rope as it comes by.

Twirling in the center can make a teacher/therapist dizzy, but students don't seem to have this problem, or at least they don't mind it when they do. Pick a student who is able to keep the rope close to the ground while twirling so it won't fly up too high and be impossible to jump over quickly.

Sideways Jump

Lay a string down and ask your player to jump from one side of the string to the other while jumping sideways (figure 57). This activity also works on rhythm, strength, and spatial awareness.

Figure 57. Sideways jump.

Gentle Jump

Tie one end of a rope to something stable. Take the other end and gently swing it back and forth low to the floor. Have your player jump over the swinging rope. Hum a song to help the jumper get the rhythm of the swinging rope: "Jump, jump, jumpy-jump; look at Eliza jumpy-jump."

Tic-Tac-Toe Game

Tape string into a giant tic-tac-toe pattern, and identify the spaces with numbers or letters. If you use letters, ask the player to jump to the letter you call out, or spell out a word and have the player jump to each lettered square in the proper order. If you use numbers, have your player memorize a series of numbers, then jump the sequence. You can ask that jumps be done backward, sideways, or forward, or that hops be done instead of jumps. This game works on muscle strength and sequential memory as well as eye-foot coordination.

Progressive Jumps #1

Tie one end of a string or rope to something solid and hold the other end. Keeping the rope close to the ground, ask your player to run and jump over it. Then raise the rope a smidgen and ask the jumper to do it again. Each time, raise the rope a little bit more until it is too high to jump over.

I have played Progressive Jumps *with a wide variety of people, from toddlers to teenagers to developmentally delayed adults. It has always been a particularly popular and well-liked game.*

Then ask your player to go under it, limbo style if you want, and keep lowering it until the player has to crawl, belly down, Army combat style, to get under the rope without touching it.

Figure 58. Jumping game.

Jumping Game

Lay out a string path of two parallel ropes a short distance apart. Have the player start with feet close together inside the rope path, then jump, landing with feet apart on the outside of the rope path (figure 58). Do a series of jumps along the path, alternating the open and closed position.

Simple Jumps

Lay a piece of string on the floor and ask the player to jump over it. Suggest jumping over it other ways—backward, sideways, arms crossed, eyes closed, legs apart, legs together, hands on head, hands behind back, and so on.

Creek Jumping

Lay out two pieces of string close together—a creek—and have players jump over the creek. Move the strings further apart, call it a brook, and have the players jump over it. Move the strings even further apart and turn it into a river to jump over!

If players "get their feet wet," have them pretend to change to dry shoes and socks. If they "fall in the river," they'll need to change their clothes. Kids love these kinds of consequences, and it takes the sting out of failing to make it over the line. You might find some days that the children purposely "fall in" so they can pretend to change shoes or clothes, but that just means they're feeling silly and having fun, and that's therapeutic, too!

Games to Enhance Laterality

String Throw

Let children throw string into the air and catch it. Have them throw it high, or throw it to a partner. Suggest juggling with three pieces (after all, when string drops, it doesn't roll away!).

Snake Catcher

Run and drag the free end of a six-foot rope on the ground while your player tries to catch the rope. Stop running as soon as your player catches the rope, to prevent rope burns. Now let the child drag the rope while you try to catch it.

Snake

Hold a string and wiggle it as it dangles enticingly on the floor. Ask the students to step on it while you keep moving it around. Have the students partner up and try this game with each other.

Games to Enhance Balance

The Path

Make a pathway with two parallel strings or ropes. Start with a wide pathway, and make it progressively narrower. Have your player stay between the two rows as much as possible. Children like to pretend that the path is a bridge over turbulent waters with sharks and monsters, so the travellers must work extra hard not to fall in (that is, step outside the lines).

Tightrope Walk

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination.**

Curvy Tightrope

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination.**

Kicking Tightrope

Lay the rope out straight and put milk cartons alongside the rope. Children walk on the "tightrope" and kick the cartons as they go along.

Squat Rope Tug

Partners squat down and hold a rope taut between them. Each person pulls on the end of the rope to try and pull the other person off balance.

Games to Enhance Motor Planning

Low Jumps

Tie a rope or a long piece of string between two chairs and have your player run and jump over it. If the string is low enough, have the student jump (or hop) over it forward, backward, and sideways.

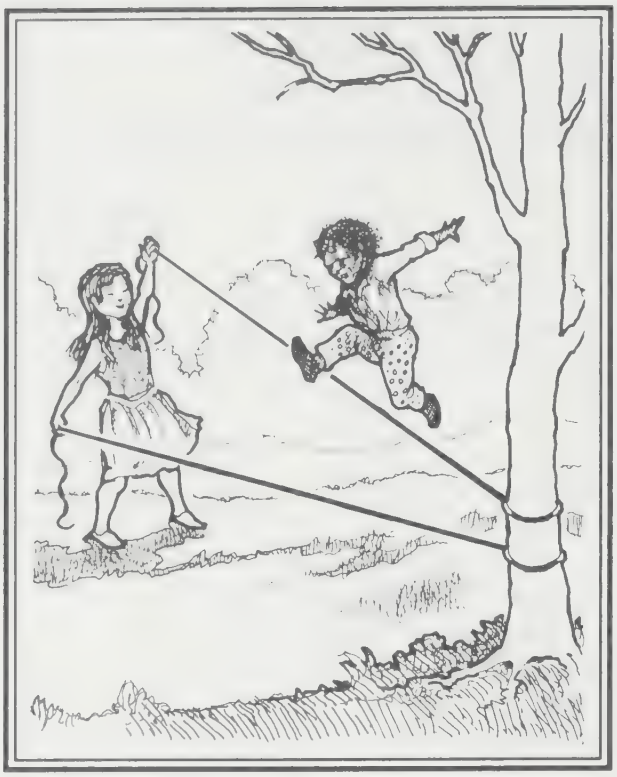


Figure 59. Progressive jumps #2.

Progressive Jumps #2

This is a two-rope variation of *Progressive Jumps #1* (under **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination**). In the original version, one end of a string or rope is tied to something solid. The other end is held low and the player runs and jumps over it. The rope is then raised slightly each time until it is too high to jump over. Then the player goes under it without touching it. The variations on this game are described below.

- Use two ropes so the person must jump over two ropes in a row.
- Hold the ropes farther apart so the player must jump over a wider area.
- Hold one rope high and the other low so that the player must jump over one rope and go under the other (figure 59).

Progressive Jumps #3

This game is the obvious progression from the game above: instead of using two ropes, you use three or more. The possibilities are limited only by the number of humans to hold the ropes. Suggestions:

- Go over the first, under the second, over the third, and so on.
- Make several double ropes to jump over—some wider, some narrower.
- Stretch the ropes at slightly different heights so players must adjust the height of their jumps over each rope (good for encouraging motor planning).
- Instead of going *over* the parallel ropes, the players think of them as aisles. They move down one "aisle," duck under the rope, reverse directions, come back up the next "aisle," and so on (good for encouraging spatial understanding).

Games to Enhance Rhythm

String Streamers

You and your client or student each hold a piece of string 12″ to 16″ long. Have the player imitate your movements. Move the string as if it were a gymnast's streamer. Move the string from side to side or up and

down. Do a series of rain movements starting off with a slow up-and-down movement, progressing to a more vigorous action that could represent a storm. Keep the movement rhythmic and controlled. Ask your player to make up a story or pattern for you to follow.

Jump Rope Songs

Jumping rope in time to a song is a wonderful way to encourage rhythmic movement, and it is hard to improve on an old favorite:

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Turn around.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Touch the ground.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Shout the news.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Show your shoes.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Go upstairs.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Say your prayers.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Turn out the light.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
Say good-night.
G-O-O-D-N-I-G-H-T

Games to Enhance Flexibility

String Step

Have a child hold a string taut overhead with both hands. Holding both ends, the player lowers it behind and steps over it, then brings it up in front and does it again. Ask the player to reverse the rotation.

Games to Enhance Eye Movement

Pendulum Game

Hang an object of interest (a doll, a flower) from a string and swing it from side to side like a pendulum. Ask the players to touch it (or poke it) when you say "Now!" Encourage them to keep their eyes on the object as it swings.

Games to Enhance Object Permanence

Pull Toy

Try this game with children who need reinforcement in understanding that objects are always there whether they are seen or not. Tie a string to a toy, then hide the toy under a scarf with the string tantalizingly near. Have your player pull the string to make it reappear.

Games to Enhance Body Awareness

Tickle, Tickle

Tickle your player with the end of a piece of string dangling over a body part or a muscle group you want the person to identify. Have the child sit or lie with eyes closed or blindfolded and guess what part of the body is being ever-so-lightly touched.

Child Wrap-Up

Have children wind themselves up with yarn or fabric strips, then unwind themselves.

Games to Enhance Group Playing

Races

See under **Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills.**

Spinning Lasso

Tie a large rope into a lasso, then have a few of the children stand inside the lasso loop and cinch the rope *lightly* around their waists. Ask them to hold on to each other and spin around while the players on the outside jump over the moving rope end. Tie a stuffed sock to the moving end to weight it and make it more visible.

Wiggling String

Divide the class into two teams and give each person on one team an eight-foot piece of string to hold between thumb and first finger. They each shake their strings around with one end dragging on the floor. The children on the other team try to step on the wiggling strings. When all the strings have been stepped on and collected, the teams switch jobs.

Snake Catcher

Designate one player as the "snake catcher" who will drag the free end of a six-foot rope on the ground. The other players are scattered over the playing area, and they try to catch the rope with their hands. Anyone catching it becomes the snake catcher. The players cannot step on the

rope, and the snake catcher must stop running as soon as a player catches the rope to prevent rope burns. (The two-player version of this is listed under **Games to Enhance Laterality**.)

Tug of Peace

Players assume the usual position for a tug of war—two teams pulling on opposite ends of a rope. However, the object here is not to see which team pulls harder but to see if both teams can go from standing to sitting and back to standing again while keeping the rope taut.

Variation: Tie the two ends of the rope together. Divide the players into four teams, and place the teams at the four corners of a square, the teams pulling the rope into a taut square. The players attempt to go from sitting to standing while holding onto the rope.

Tug of War

The other variation of the above is, of course, the traditional Tug of War. Two teams pull against each other, trying to pull the other side forward over a marked line. The farther back the teams are from the center line, the more strength the players must exert to pull the opposing team over the line.

Horsey

Tie a string around one child's waist, leaving three- to four-foot "reins." The "rider" holds both ends of the string. When the rider says "giddyup" and shakes the reins, the horse goes; when the rider pulls on the right string, the horse goes to the right; a pull on the left string guides the horse to the left. Tug both string ends and the horse stops. Although this game is for the more controlled children, it is a good activity for enhancing listening skills and tactile awareness.

Tails

Give each participant a tail by tucking a string (long enough to drag on the floor) into the back of each child's waistband. (For children whose clothing does not provide a waistband, tie a string around the waist and tuck the tail into the waist string.)

The children run after each other, trying to step on each others' tails and pull them out (figure 60). The challenge is to collect as many tails as possible while keeping one's own.

This is a great activity for warming up the group or when there is excess energy you want to drain off before a quieter activity.

Figure 60. Tails.

Dragon Tail

Children line up, holding onto each other at the waist. The last person in line has a string tail hanging out of a back pocket or tucked into the waist band.

The dragon's head tries to whip around and catch the dragon's tail while everyone holds on for the chase.

6
Games to Play with Cans

Most of these games use aluminum soft drink cans which are easy to obtain. It is even possible to borrow a bunch from a recycling center and return them, a little worse for the wear, after a class.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Can Dumbbells

Do a regular weight-lifting session with full cans of tomato or fruit juice. Have the weightlifter lift them from shoulder height to straight up overhead. Have your client work the biceps and extensors by holding the weights and bending the arms at the elbows, bringing the weights up to the shoulders, then straightening the arms again. Work the abductors and adductors by having the client hold the cans with arms straight out in front, and going to an arms-open-wide position, then bringing the arms together again.

Do as many repetitions as possible. If large tomato juice cans are too heavy for your group, use smaller cans (beans or soup).

Can Stacking

Have players stack up empty cans, one on top of the other, and see how high a tower can be made before it all falls over.

Can Weights

Fill cans that have snug-fitting plastic lids with differing amounts of sand or gravel and let the player kick them to a defined target, such as a stationary can. The variations in weight will give your learner experience in using different amounts of strength to kick the cans.

Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills

Can Nesting

Find different sizes of empty cans, such as those for peaches, peas, and tomato paste. Clean them well and examine the rim of the can to make sure there are no sharp edges. Paint the cans different colors with lead-free enamel paint or cover with adhesive paper or magazine pictures.

These cans make wonderful stacking and nesting toys for young children and are easy to replace if one becomes lost.

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

Can Discus

If you have played the *Can Flatteners* game described below in the section on **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination,** you now have a supply of flattened, discus-shaped cans. Lay a cardboard box on its side and ask the players to throw the cans into the box. When everyone has successfully completed this task, you have a box full of cans to bring to the recycling center. Wasn't that easy?

Bowling

Set soft drink or other aluminum cans in a pyramid shape and have students use a ball or a beanbag to knock them over (figure 61). The smaller the ball, the harder the task.

If counting is a skill that needs to be reinforced, ask your players to count how many cans were knocked down each time. After a number of turns, ask how many were knocked down altogether.

Figure 61. Bowling.

English Bowling

Place two or three cans in a line facing the bowler, each can a ball's width away from the next. The object is to get the rolling ball as close to the cans as possible *without* knocking them over!

Variation: The first player rolls a ball toward the cans, then the second player rolls a ball so that it nudges the first ball closer to the can and hits it, thereby disqualifying that first ball from winning (figure 62).

Can Aim

Set up a series of cans on top of a table or a box and draw a line a few feet away (more or less depending on the skill level of the players). Ask them to knock the cans over using another can as the "ball."

Shell Cans

In this version of the carnival shell game, use one large can and one small can, and hide a treat (popcorn, raisin, cracker) or an inedible object under one of the cans. Shuffle the cans around as if trying to confuse the

child about which can is covering the treat. Actually all the child needs to notice (and learn) is whether the item is under the big can or the small can.

For older children, use three identical-sized cans and shuffle them around to see if the children can stay focused and follow the can with the treat.

This is not the usual eye-hand coordination game, but rather a mental focusing with the eye on what the other person's hand is doing!

Figure 62. English bowling.

Can Throw

A simple game of "how far can you throw an aluminum can" can be satisfying. See if your player finds a difference between throwing by holding the sides of the can, and throwing while holding the end of the can. What is the difference in distance between overhand and underhand throws?

So as not to waste these cans scattered all over the floor, see the next game.

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Can Obstacle Course

Randomly throw the cans all over the floor (or play *Can Throw,* described above). Ask the player to run from one end of the room to the other without touching any of the cans. The player can jump or step over the cans, go around them, or use a combination of these moves according to your directions.

Kick the Can

This is an old-fashioned rural game and you can make an old-fashioned country lane by marking a path indoors on the floor with felt pens, masking tape, or yardsticks, or outdoors with sticks, hoses, or any other material. The path can be short, straight, and wide for beginners, or long, curvy, and narrow for those who need more challenge. The idea is to start at one end and kick the can to the other end, controlling the can so that it stays within the lines.

For added skill, have the children kick their cans around obstacles you have placed in the road.

Can Flatteners

Turn the task of flattening food cans for recycling into a game. Remove both ends of cans and lay them out on their sides for players to jump on.

Alternatively, have the players stomp on aluminum soft drink cans as they walk along a path of standing cans.

Games to Enhance Spatial Sense

Home Base

Put one can down as home base, and set up three others at different distances and directions from the first. It is helpful to use cans that contained different brands of soft drinks.

The player stands by the home can and notes exactly where the other cans are placed. Ask the player to walk, with eyes closed, directly to the root beer can, for example, pick it up, and return home. Have the player repeat this for the other cans.

Variation: With eyes still closed, the player goes from one can to the others named without returning to home. In this variation, the player must maintain a spatial sense of how the cans relate to each other.

Can Course

Set up a series of cans and have the player kick another can around them in the pattern you designate. For example, the child must go around each can once or twice or between a row of cans.

Games to Enhance Laterality

All of the following games help learners experience a sense of sidedness.

Under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination:**

Can Discus
Bowling
English Bowling
Can Aim
Can Throw

Under **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination:**

Kick the Can
Can Flatteners

Games to Enhance Balance

Stilts

Use two large cans (such as tomato juice cans or two-pound coffee cans) and make stilts: poke two holes in the bottom, across from each other out near the rim. Thread a rope through the holes for the stilt walker to hold onto while walking on the cans. (Don't try this barefoot!)

Stepping Stone Cans

Make a path of large, inverted cans. The players step from one can to another down the path (figure 63).

If some of the cans squash as children step on them, consider it a challenge to the children's balance (but stay nearby to lend a supporting arm).

Figure 63. Stepping stone cans.

Games to Enhance Motor Planning

Erratic Kick

Place the cans randomly around the room. On a signal, the player runs around the room, kicking over each can. Encourage the player to plan the route as effectively as possible, because the goal is to complete the task quickly.

To make this activity more rewarding, use a stack of cans at each spot. They will make a satisfying crash as the stack is kicked over. Additionally, all the rolling cans make extra obstacles to be dealt with.

Games to Enhance Rhythm

Castanets

Fill juice cans that have plastic snap-on lids with different materials so they make different sounds. Use these cans as castanets. Have your learners distinguish between playing loudly or softly, slowly or rapidly.

Games to Enhance Group Playing

Many of the games in this chapter can also be played in a group, with people taking turns for each activity.

Under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination:**

Can Discus
Bowling
English Bowling
Shell Cans

Under **Games to Enhance Rhythm:**

Castanets

The following sequence of games using cans or milk cartons leads nicely from one activity to the next. This is useful if you are trying to lead a tightly organized class and want to pace the activities. If one game leads right into the next, there is less likelihood that kids will become distracted and unruly during the break between activities, requiring that you restore order before the next game can be introduced.

Can Tower Relay

Place a pile of cans at one end of the room, students at the other. Students run to the pile, pick up a bunch of cans, run back to "home" and build a tower, run and get more, and so on, to build as high a tower as they can and as fast as they can. This game releases some of the excess energy the children have from sitting at desks (especially if they do it twice, "unbuilding" the just-made tower and building it back up on the original side). If the activity is done twice, consider using a timer for the fun of seeing if the children can build the tower faster the second time.

Can Throw

After the towers fall over, have children throw cans as far as possible. This helps reduce any frustrations children might have felt if their towers kept falling over.

Obstacle Run

With the cans from *Can Throw* scattered all over the floor, have the children run from one end of the room to the other without running into or in any way touching any of the cans.

Can Squash

Have the children run across the room again. This time, they try to land on the cans!

Can Pick-up

Children run from one end of the room to the other, gathering up all the cans as they go. Children see how many cans they can pick up and put into a box at the other end of the room.

(This is a sneaky way of getting the room cleaned up, and the kids must know it too. But for some weird and wonderful reason, they go for it each time! They have discharged some energy, they have worked on some movement skills, and the play area is tidy again!)

7
Games to Play with Paper

These games use all sorts of paper products such as magazines, used photocopy paper, grocery bags, and scrap paper—all of which are easy to find.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Action Cards

Write the numbers from 5 to 20 on separate index cards or small slips of paper. On another set of cards, write a variety of actions (for example, skip, hop, jump, twirl, bounce, rotate, run backward, take giant steps, thrust, slash, swish, flick, press, push, slip, dab, jerk, drag, perch, slide, kick backward, bunny hop, and so on). Stack the two sets of cards in separate piles.

Players take turns selecting cards, one from each pile. The players must perform the action on the movement card the number of times stated on the number card.

Note: Adapt the numbers and actions to fit the attention span and skill level of your group. The game can be as simple as three jumps to as complicated as slash, flick, and dab movements done 20 times in any order.

Variation: You can also use descriptions on the movement cards. Instruct the children to move like an alligator, a crab, a lame dog, a spider, a frog, a duck, an elephant, a snowball, an inchworm, or even an elevator!

Paper Faces

Have students draw a pair of matching faces on two sheets of used paper. The format should be a happy-face type of design, but instruct the students to use different expressions (for example, angry, frustrated, sad, proud, stupid, sleepy, and so on).

Children can use these faces in three different activities:

1. **Active game:**
   This is a jumping activity. Shuffle the papers and lay them on the floor face up. Someone calls out an emotion and the player jumps to the face with that expression. The player then must jump to the matching face, regardless of the distance.

2. **Dramatic game:**
   Act out movements that depict the emotion on the face. Walk briskly with anger or amble with sadness; reach out with longing or stomp with frustration.

3. **Quiet game:**
   This is a concentration-type memory game. The papers are laid face down on the table and each child turns over two pictures on each turn. If two matching pictures are turned over, the child keeps that pair. If the pictures do not match, the papers are turned over again, and the next person has a turn.

Movement Categories

Cut out magazine pictures that depict actions of any sort (for example, someone eating, running, reading, watching television, playing, and so on). The players look at the pictures, tell what the person is doing, and imitate that action.

Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills

Paper Games

Use a variety of paper: tissue paper, grocery bags, butcher paper, wrapping paper, shelf paper, shirt-package cardboard, paper plates, waxed paper, cellophane, foil, newspaper, doilies, and placemats. Have the children work with the paper in a variety of ways: cut, tear, crinkle, wave, toss, crumple, color, fold, flap, or stuff in a sock or milk carton.

Possible games:

- How fast can you tear a paper bag into small shreds?
- How many shapes can you tear out of waxed paper?
- How far can you throw a ball made out of foil? out of newspaper? out of tissue paper? out of cellophane?
- Can you throw some sort of paper into the air and catch it as it comes floating down?
- Can you make the paper plate into a flying-saucer game?
- Have the children experiment with fringes. Using scissors, they snip a 1″ fringe around the edge of a paper, or tear a fringe with fingers. Mark heavy lines where your player should cut or tear, if needed.
- What kind of paper chains could be made out of the different papers? Have children cut strips of different types of paper. Form the first paper into a circle and glue or staple the ends together. Attach the next strip to the first circle and continue in this fashion to make a chain.

Catalog Browsing

Give children old catalogs for page-turning experience as well as for tearing.

Grocery Bag Masks

Children tear bits and pieces out of grocery bags to make masks (figure 64).

Blind Drawing Game

Give children pencils and paper, and ask them to draw something in the room without looking at the paper while they are drawing. This is especially amusing if they draw portraits of each other.

Design Drawing

Play some music and ask the students to draw a design on the paper that fits the tune of the music. Point out that they should not try to draw something recognizable, but simply move the pencil or crayon around any which way.

Let them color in the spaces their lines made, using crayons, colored chalk, pastels, or colored markers. Encourage them to stay within the lines, if possible, to reinforce their fine motor control.

Variation: Instead of using music, you could ask children to scribble or free-form doodle on the page, then color in the spaces.

Shape Figures

Ask your players to draw a shape, such as a square, on a sheet of paper. Then ask them to use that square shape to create something else. For example, a square could be turned into a train, a jack-in-the-box, a car, or a house (figure 65).

Use other shapes in the same way, or use several shapes at once. What can be drawn from a square, a triangle, and a circle?

Figure 64. Grocery bag masks.

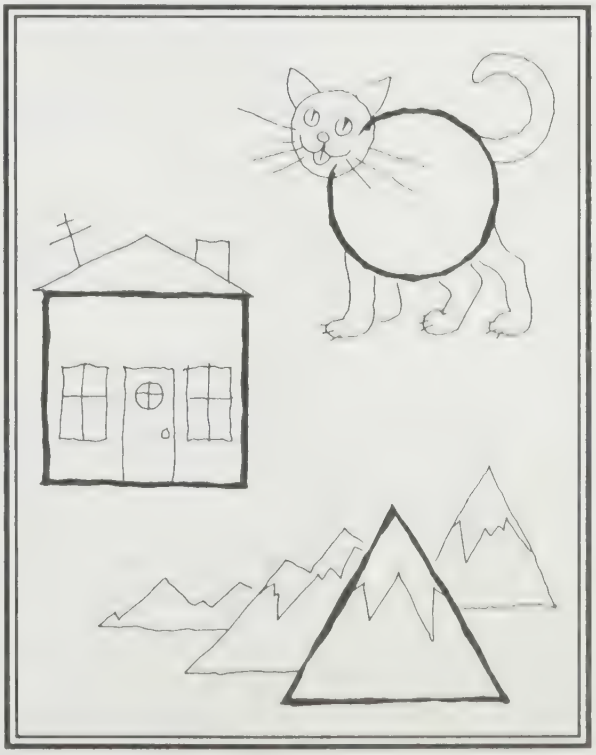


Figure 65. Shape figures.

Copying

The classic progression of shapes that leads to good fine motor control starts with a horizontal line. Draw this on a piece of paper, and ask the child to copy what you drew. Then draw a vertical line, again asking the child to imitate you. Progress to a circle, an L shape, and eventually a square.

Gift Wrap Paper

Buy a roll of plain shelf paper and unroll it in front of a group of children. Arm them with crayons and felt markers, stand back, and let them at it. No rules apply other than to keep their artistic efforts confined to the paper and not to draw on top of anyone else's work.

The final results can be displayed on the wall, then rolled back up and used as gift-wrapping paper.

Puzzle Matches

Mount magazine pictures onto pieces of cardboard or heavy paper and cut them up into odd shapes. How many pieces and how odd the cuts depend on the age of your group.

Place a pile of cut-up pieces from several pictures in front of the students and ask them to find the matching pieces to put the puzzles together.

Variation #1: Combine this game with a group balance-beam activity in which each player is given a piece of the puzzle before crossing the beam. At the end of the beam is a table with the puzzle on it. The children add their pieces to the puzzle after they cross the beam.

Variation #2: Instead of cutting the picture into smaller pieces, cut it in half and have the player guess what the other half is. For a simpler version, cut pictures in half and have the player find the matching halves.

Scissor Work

Draw heavy parallel lines on a piece of paper; have your learner use scissors and try to cut between the two lines. Cut out the center of a paper plate. For the beginner, hold the circle and turn it as the child cuts. Once the child has mastered that, move on to cutting out wavy lines, spirals, and fringes. Experiment with cutting other things too, such as lettuce, potato peels, and dried leaves.

Drawing

Encourage drawing. Tape a large piece of butcher or computer paper or an open bag on the floor, or obtain used photocopy paper from an office and provide all the paper a child could possibly want for inspiration.

Paper Weaving

Cut slits in the sides of a paper bag, leaving the bag intact at the top and bottom (see figure 66). Then cut strips of colored construction paper, wrapping paper, or even magazine pictures. Have children weave these strips in and out of the slits in the paper bag for a basket effect.

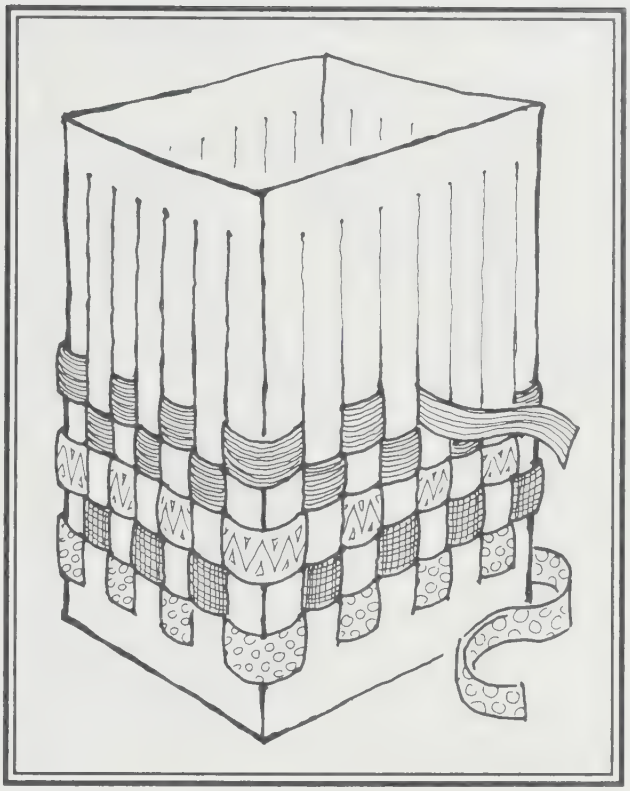


Figure 66. Paper weaving.

Paper Puppets

Have children draw figures on heavy paper, cut them out, and mount them on wooden craft sticks or tongue depressors. Use yarn for hair and scrap fabric for clothes. Put on a show!

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

Tear-a-Shape

Use a variety of paper (see the list in *Paper Games* under **Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills**), choosing the particular types according to the finger strength of your players. Ask the children to tear a shape from the paper. Beginners may want to try to tear out a simple square or other easy shape, while the more advanced might want to make a person or an animal.

Suggest a theme such as "Animals," "Vehicles," or "Summer Fun Things," and have the children mount the results onto a large collage at the end of the activity.

Toilet Roll Beads

Although the name is not inviting, toilet paper rolls cut into smaller sections make great beads for the beginning beader. With this size bead, children can even use rope, so that inexperienced fingers can do quite well with this bilateral activity.

If you want to make the beads more appealing, cover them with adhesive paper.

You can also cut up the rolls inside paper towels.

Grocery Bag Throw

In *Grocery Bag Jump* (under **Games to Enhance Balance**), children step into grocery bags and jump around. As a result, some of the bags become torn. Children can ball these up and throw them into the bags

Figure 67. Grocery bag fight.

that didn't get torn. This is a good way to clean up the area after the jumping game is finished, as well as improving eye-hand coordination.

Grocery Bag Fight

This is another use for torn grocery bags. Partners flail at the other person's bag with no particular point besides hitting the other's bag (figure 67).

The bags are torn beyond use fairly quickly, so this is a quick way to release that energy before the next game begins.

Paper Cup Toss

Give a child two cups with a solid object inside one of the cups. Have the player toss the object from one cup to the other, seeing how high it can go and still be caught in the other cup.

I don't approve of fighting, but some young children I know seem to cherish the sport and use any opportunity to test themselves against each other. In this game of flailing away with grocery bags, the rule is that children can only hit other bags and not anyone's flesh.

Paper Towel Tube Swords

The tubes from paper towel rolls make good swords for fencing. Use this activity with players who have fairly decent eye-hand control so that they will be more likely to hit each other's sword and not each other.

Paper Towel Catch

Tie a canning jar ring to one end of a piece of string; fasten the other end of the string to a paper towel tube. The object is to flip the canning ring up and onto the tube.

Flying Paper Plates

Paper plates, especially the more durable ones, make fine flying saucers. Let children sail the flying saucers back and forth to each other, or set up a line of milk or yogurt cartons, and have your players sail the paper plates to knock down the cartons. The lighter-weight plates are good for throwing and catching because they are more unpredictable as to where they will land; thus the catcher must run around and try to be in the right place at the right time. (Scout around after parties for plates that contained something like cookies, where the crumbs can be brushed off and the plate is relatively clean. This way, the plates can be used one more time before they are returned to the earth.)

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Footprint Game

Have children stand on pieces of paper while they (or you) outline their feet. (Used photocopy paper is perfect for this.) Make many footprints, sometimes outlining both feet, something outlining only one foot. Children can color the foot shapes if they desire.

Then lay the footprints out in a long line. If the first sheet has two feet on it, the player jumps onto the paper with both feet. If the next has only one foot, the player hops onto that piece. If the footprints are close together it indicates baby steps; if they are far apart, it encourages giant steps.

Older players could be asked to distinguish between a left foot and a right foot.

Variation: Make outlines of hands, too—sometimes one hand, sometimes both hands. Include them in the line of footprints (figure 68). Children may have to hop on one paper and, while balancing on one foot, reach down and put two hands on the next paper. They then jump over that paper to the two footprints on the next sheet.

Let students take turns laying out the papers. This gives them a chance to determine the sequence of movements that will be required.

If you want to use these feet patterns for more than one game, laminate them with clear adhesive plastic for greater durability.

Instead of using separate sheets of paper, have children make a series of foot and hand prints on a long roll of butcher or shelf paper.

Figure 68. Footprint game (plus handprints).

Paper Jumps

Tape down used photocopy papers in a random pattern, varying the distance between them. The length of the jumps will vary—some long, some short, and some impossible (but ask the jumpers to try anyway; the impossible is always a good stretch!).

Sometimes introduce additional movements, such as hopping, backward jumping, jumping and twirling, leaping, and so on.

Games to Enhance Spatial Sense

Blind Walking

One person (eyes closed, blindfolded, or with a grocery bag over the head) is led by a friend around the room or yard on a long "trusting" walk—trusting, that is, that the leader won't lead the blind person into a table!

It is an interesting lesson in spatial awareness for the leader to stop every so often and ask the blind person to state where they think they are (for example, "near the water fountain," "by the book shelf," and so on).

Outside Blind Walk

If you have trees and some yard on or near the school property, play the above game with the leader taking the blind person by a circuitous route to a tree. The person being led feels or hugs that tree before being returned to the starting point.

Remove the bag and ask the formerly blind person to try to find the tree. (The player might need to hug the tree to see if it feels familiar.)

Blind Crossing

Place grocery bags over students' heads and have them cross the room backward on a diagonal. This takes concentration and a sense of spatial awareness.

Blind Ball

See under **Games to Enhance Group Playing.**

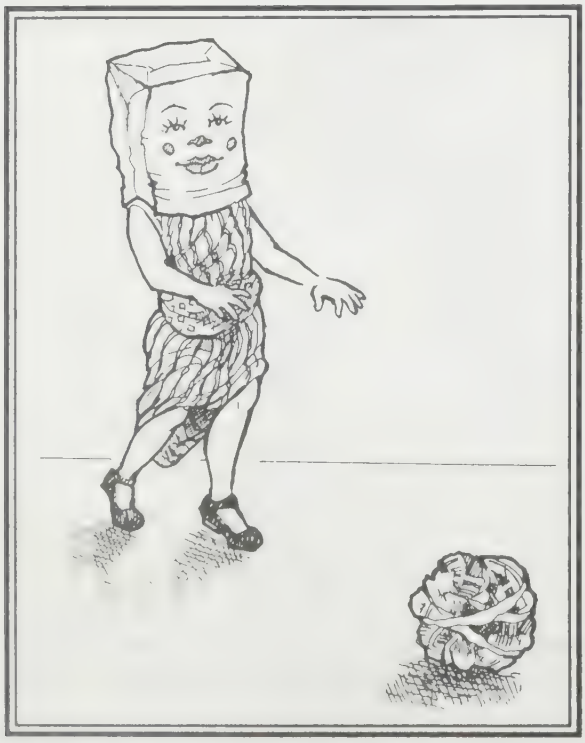


Figure 69. Blind pick-up.

Cooperative Pin the Tail

See under **Games to Enhance Group Playing.**

Blind Pick-up

Place a piece of balled-up paper in the middle of the room and have the player note the location before putting a bag over the head. Ask the student to walk directly toward the paper and pick it up (figure 69). This is harder than it sounds, and the attempt increases one's internal sense of space.

Change the location of the ball for the same player or sequential players so that sometimes it is directly in front of the player, on a diagonal path, close by, or very far away.

If you have a client who is weak on one side or has one side "neglect," purposely place the paper on the weaker side.

Bag Heads #1

This game uses paper grocery bags. (If you have many students, ask them to bring in used grocery bags for this game.)

Put a bag over one student's head. This student tries to touch any of the other students who are trying to stay out of reach but inside the boundary lines. When another player is touched, this player also puts on a bag: now there are two bag heads to avoid.

The game continues until all players have bags over their heads except for one person. That one person becomes the first bag head for the next game.

If the bag people are having a hard time finding other players because the room is so large, reduce the size of the boundaries or ask the other players to call out the names of the bag heads to give aural clues as to where they are.

Instead of trying to avoid being tagged, most players tend to seek it out. Some people just like to have bags over their heads!

Bag Heads #2

In this version, only the person who is It wears a bag. The other players are free to run around until It says, "freeze." At this point, every player stands still while It wanders around, trying to find someone. After finding another player, It must guess who the person is by touch only. If It guesses correctly, that person is now the new It and the game continues. If It does not guess correctly, the other players continue to run around until It calls out "freeze" and tries again.

Backward Walking

Walking or running backward across a gym floor is always a little scary. Doing it with eyed closed or a grocery bag over the head adds to the thrill!

Games to Enhance Laterality

Paper Target

Draw a target on a piece of paper (a giant black dot will do), and tape the target low on the wall. Ask your player to kick something at the target—a newspaper ball (see Chapter 2), a milk carton block (see Chapter 3), or even a ball.

Paper Towel Catch

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Games to Enhance Balance

Figure 70. Toilet paper wrap.

Figure 71. Grocery bag kick.

Toilet Paper Wrap

Although this game requires a material that has not previously been used (of course!), it is worth including because it is a fairly inexpensive game for the amount of fun it produces.

Players wrap each other up in toilet paper from neck to ankles so that their arms are at their sides and their are feet together (figure 70). When the "mummies" are fully wrapped, stage a jumping race. Have the mummies jump around by themselves, or have the mummies perform maneuvers such as jumping around a series of obstacles until the toilet paper breaks apart.

Grocery Bag Kick

The players start at a designated spot with one foot in a grocery bag. They then kick the leg that is in the bag, causing the bag to fly off and land on the floor (figure 71). If the bag lands on its side, they put one leg in again and kick it further along toward the goal, 20 to 30 feet away.

If, however, the bag lands on its bottom, players can put both feet in the bag and jump five times toward the goal. After the five jumps, they resume the one-leg kick routine again.

Grocery Bag Jump

Players stand in grocery bags and jump from one spot to another. Conduct this activity as a race, or time the students for each jumper's personal best.

Other grocery bags can be laid on the "track" as obstacles to jump over.

Paper Toweling Walk

Give each player three paper towel tubes. Have them walk along, holding two of the rolls while balancing the third on the other two.

Paper Pick Up

Players stand in front of scrunched-up balls of paper, lean forward, and pick up the paper with their teeth. If possible, have children keep their hands behind their backs. The hands can be used to provide support, if necessary, but not for picking up paper.

Variation: Form teams of two players. One person picks up the paper with teeth, as above, and passes it to the other team member. That person runs to a designated container and drops the ball into it.

Games to Enhance Motor Planning

Grocery Bag Slide

See how many ways your players can move on unopened grocery bags. Skating? Sitting? Sliding? Balancing? Moving in different shapes?

Watch to see what the players do, and suggest that the others imitate them.

Grocery Bag Obstacles

Arrange unopened bags on the floor, randomly but evenly spaced. Have players move around these obstacles to taped music or a drum beat, running, tiptoeing, sliding sideways, walking, crawling, jumping, moving on backs or stomachs, hopping, skating, twirling, walking backward, and so on.

Ask your player(s) if they can move between and around the bags without touching even a tiny corner.

Games to Enhance Rhythm

Crepe Paper Streamers

This activity uses that leftover crepe paper from the school dance or a birthday party.

- Give five- or six-foot lengths of crepe paper to each player. Play music and have students move around the room in any manner they want, using the streamers in any rhythmical way they desire.
- Pair or group the players and have them make up a dance with each other, using the streamers.
- Let students decorate and wrap up their bodies with streamers and used crepe paper. Have them move around the room, inspired by how these decorations make them feel.
- Have each person make a design on the floor with the streamers and then move around the design in different ways: dancing, hopping, jumping, and so on.

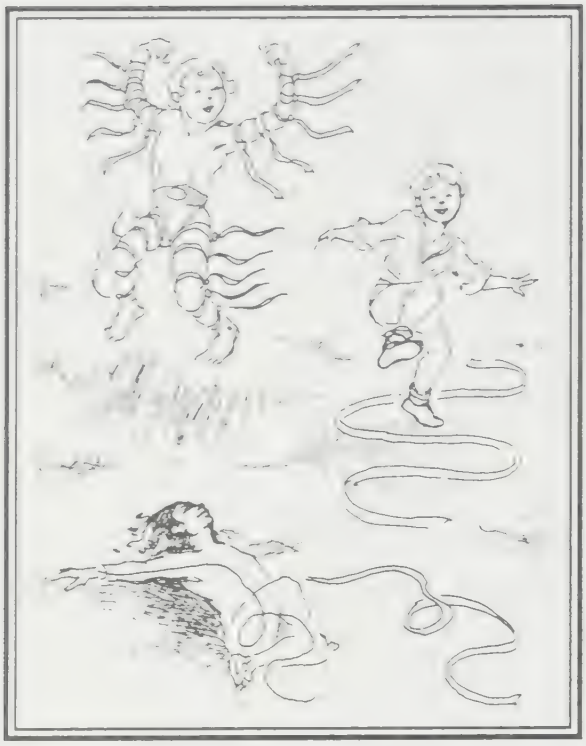


Figure 72. Crepe paper streamers.

- Have the students lay their streamers out on the floor. Then have them lie down next to their streamers and copy the patterns with their bodies (figure 72).
- Attach the streamers to sticks, and let students move them in a stylized fashion (figure eights, arm rotations in the same or opposite direction, side to side, up and down).
- Have the players make up short routines to perform for each other.

Make sure each child has a large space to work in.

Musical Paintings

Play a variety of music—calypso, reggae, classical, jazz, rock. Encourage your learners to paint what they hear. For example, one person might paint fast, short strokes when the music is quick, using long, languid strokes when the music is flowing.

Games to Enhance Flexibility

Grocery Bag Challenge

(1) How many ways can one get into a bag without using the hands?

(2) On how many parts of the body can one wear a bag? How can one move when the bag is there?

Games to Enhance Group Playing

Bag I.D.

One person wears a grocery bag over the head; another person stands in front of the bagged person. The bagged person then must try to guess who is standing there by touching that person, judging size, shape, length of hair, etc. (figure 73). The person standing in front should not say anything, so that the clues will be only tactile. If the player is having a hard time identifying the other person, then that person could say something and add voice recognition to the game. Once the person is identified, that person becomes the next bagged player.

As written, this game sounds a little risque, but it has been played with a wide variety of ages and has never presented a problem. Younger children and adults with delays don't seem to have an attitude about being touched, and older students know that there are limits to what part of the body to touch. Still, you know your group, so let that be your guide. You could always change the game such that the person standing in front is not touched but talks in a disguised voice.

Variation: Sing a song while the identifying is going on to keep all the players involved. Use tunes from commercials or nursery rhymes, fitting the words to the melody to ask, "Who is this, who is this? Can you tell us who is this?"

Figure 73. Bag I.D.

Blind Ball

Have the children sit in a circle, then ask them to look around at who is sitting where in the circle. Challenge them to try and memorize who is where. Then have players place paper bags over their heads and start to play a game of ball, rolling the ball back and forth to each other.

Whoever has the ball first calls out the name of a person and attempts to roll the ball to that person. The player who receives the ball calls out his name so everyone will know to whom the ball actually went. That person then calls out the name of another player, and rolls the ball.

Cooperative Pin the Tail

Have the children draw and color an animal or outline the body of one of the players on a large sheet of paper. Part of the group colors the picture while the other members of the group make a paper tail.

Play the regular game of Pin the Tail. Blindfold a person, then have the rest of the group call out directions to guide the blindfolded person to put the tail in the right place. Since they would be giving directions such as "To the right" or "Go up," they all would be having some experience in spatial awareness.

Variation: Instead of making a tail to pin on a body shape, have the students make facial features and clothes that need pinning on. Everyone would be adding something different.

Don't be surprised when the directions that are given have the arm pinned on the head and the eyes on the knee cap! Children love the ridiculous.

Animal Partners

This is a two-part game. In the first part, the children make masks by drawing pictures of animal faces on grocery bags.

In the second part, half the children put on their masks and the other half make the sounds of the animals portrayed. The masked players attempt to find their partners.

This game requires some organization: quietly assign each "sound" person to a masked partner. For example, Sean has a mask of a dog; tell Jennifer that she is to bark until Sean finds her. Eliza is wearing an elephant mask, and Zachary is to make elephant sounds until he is found.

Whether you want the masks to have eye holes in them or whether the children will rely totally on sound depends on the skill level of your group.

Remind the children as they are making their masks to depict animals that make sounds, unless you want the game to use mainly movement for identification. A scorpion, a crab, a deer, an elephant, and an ape are all animals that could be identified by their characteristic movements.

8
Games to Play with Cardboard Boxes

Grocery and liquor stores are good sources for cardboard boxes. Boxes are usually piled up and free for the taking. Retailers who sell washing machines and refrigerators will save large boxes on request, and shoe stores have useful shoe and boot boxes.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Blind Train Ride

Here's a tricky activity for building listening skills and trust as well as strength. A cardboard box is the train. The rider, sitting in the box, holds onto a rope, the other end of which is held by the puller who pulls the train. To add challenge, put a paper bag over the puller's head (figure 74). The puller must trust the rider for directions. Remind the rider that the instructions had better be good ones, because the rider and the puller will switch places.

Figure 74. Blind train ride.

Box Walk

In this game everyone gets a box to stand in. They then must jump, wiggle, thrash, and otherwise move their boxes from one end of the room to the other without getting out of the box.

Jump Off

Sturdy, reinforced cardboard boxes make good platforms from which beginning jumpers can jump. Make a path of these boxes. The jumper climbs on the first one and jumps off, goes to the second one and jumps off, and so on.

Use a timer to see if the child can do the course more quickly on future tries.

Figure 75. Square moves.

Square Moves

Cut cardboard squares from the sides of boxes, and ask children how many different ways they can move the squares across the room (figure 75).

- "Sit on it with legs straight out in front. Bend your legs toward you, pulling yourself forward. You're rowing a boat!"
- "Sit on the square backward and push off with your legs to propel yourself forward. You're in reverse!"
- "Stand behind the square, bend down, and put both hands on it. Run forward. You're a race car!"
- "Put one foot on the square and push along with the other foot. You're riding a scooter."
- "Kneel on the square and pull yourself along. You're a turtle!"
- "Put one foot on the square and pivot around with the other foot. You're a spinning top!"
- "Bend over and put your hands on the square; push the square forward, then walk your feet forward toward the square. Repeat, repeat, repeat. You're an inch worm!"

Push and Flop *is not the kind of activity adults would think of, but once Tyler came up with it, the rest of my class were eager to try it.*

What other ways are there to move? Let the players experiment and then have them imitate each other's movements. Can they give their movements a name?

Figure 76. Back push.

Varnish the squares or cover them with adhesive paper if you want them to be pretty or more durable.

Push and Flop

A child pushes a cardboard box quickly across a smooth floor. Once the box is moving quickly, the child flops down on it for the rest of the ride.

Back Push

The child sits in the box on her back, legs hanging over the side, and reclines (figure 76). The feet then push the box backward across the room.

Box Toss

Picking up a cardboard box and hurling (or heaving) it forward as in the shot put is good for upper-arm strength. This also encourages children's identifying with mighty superheroes, especially if the hurling is done with one arm.

Box Flip

Have the child throw a box into the air, causing it to twirl in flight. This is another good body strengthener.

Box Bang

The player tosses one box into the air. While it is airborne, the child tries to hit it with another box. This game does not take much in the way of aiming, but it does require strength and timing. The boxes also make a satisfyingly loud thump when they collide.

Box Roll

One day a young boy named Eric brought a long, narrow box to class, such as might have held an upright vacuum cleaner. Eric's idea was to get inside and roll around. This was a wonderful sight—this rolling box moving along as if on its own volition. His brother Kelvin wanted a turn, but since they had been fighting earlier, Eric was not giving up his box. Besides, he was having such a great time. We could hear him giggling inside the box. Kelvin, however, got to join in the fun anyway, because as this giggling, rolling box came toward him, he jumped over it to get out of the way. Realizing what fun that had been, he kept running back and forth, jumping over the rolling box as it made its way across the gym floor.

Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills

Marble Arches

Cut off the four top flaps of a cardboard box and place it upside down on the floor. Use a knife to cut out some arches or small doors in the sides of the box. Make some of the openings wide and large, others narrow and smaller. Seat your players a short distance away and ask them to flick or shoot marbles or ping-pong balls into the openings (figure 77).

Figure 77. Marble arches.

Cardboard Purse

Cut out the sides of a cardboard box to obtain four rectangles. Punch holes around three sides of each piece. (If a hole puncher can't do the job, use an ice pick.) Then have your worker lace together two cardboard pieces of the same size using yarn or string. (Wrap duct tape around the end of the string to stiffen the end.) This will be more of a portfolio than a purse, but it can be used to house your learner's favorite pictures.

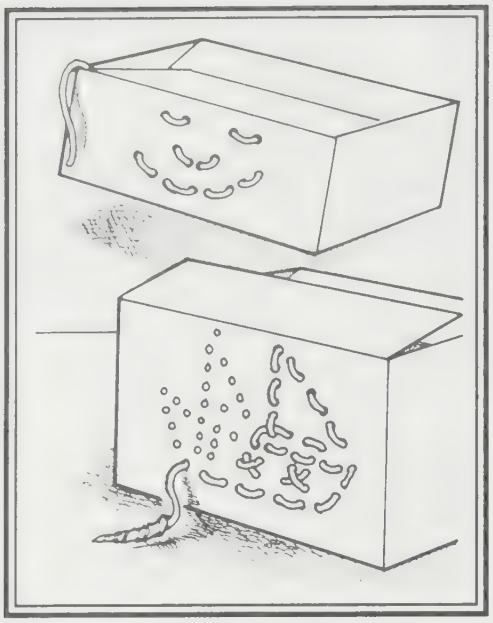


Figure 78. Cardboard picture.

Cardboard Picture

This is similar to the lacing activity above, except holes are punched in a design in the center of the cardboard. The worker threads the yarn in and out of the holes, making a design or a picture (figure 78). This type of activity can be as simple or as complicated as needed for the skill level of your worker.

Cardboard Paintings

The sides of cardboard boxes make nice, sturdy "paper" for poster paint because it doesn't tear. You could even mark off a 1″ space along the edges for a frame.

Cardboard Easel

Cut off the corner of a box and it will make a handy easel (see figure 79).

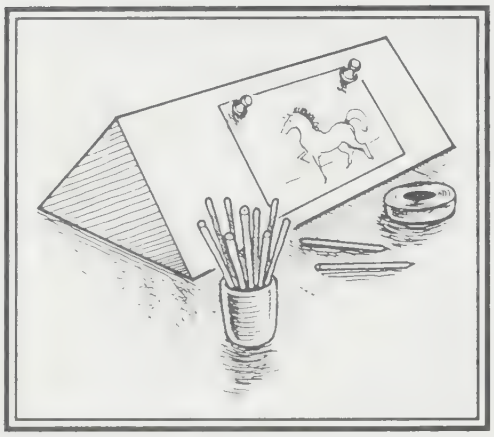


Figure 79. Cardboard easel.

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

Toss in Box

Lay out different-sized boxes on the floor and mark a spot where the throwers will stand. Have them see how many balls, beanbags, or pebbles they can throw into the boxes. If you use a scoring system, give them more points for the smaller boxes.

Box-Bottom Flying Saucers

If you are looking for different things for your clients to throw, use the bottoms of boxes (figure 80). These nice, flat rectangles make excellent throwing objects that are useful for increasing strength. If the thrower is aiming at an object, the activity also works on eye-hand coordination as well.

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Kick Box

Cut both ends out of a box and lay it on its side. Ask the children to kick a ball through the box.

Set up several boxes of differing sizes and have children pretend they are playing miniature golf as they kick their balls (tennis balls? golf balls? beach balls?) through each box. The bigger the box, the lower the par for that course.

Games to Enhance Spatial Sense

Nesting Boxes

It is surprisingly easy to obtain shoe and boot boxes from shoe stores. Children's shoe boxes fit into regular-sized shoe boxes, which fit into boot boxes. Voila—a large-motor nesting game!

Box Tunnel

Open up both ends of a series of large boxes and have the children crawl through.

Figure 80. Box-bottom flying saucers.

Games to Enhance Laterality

Box Drag

Have the children stand with one foot in a box, the other on the floor. They are to walk and draw the box along as quickly as possible in a straight line or following a path.

Square Moves

See under **Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills.**

Games to Enhance Balance

Train Ride

One child sits in a box while another child pushes or pulls the box. The person doing the pulling or pushing is developing muscle strength, and the one sitting in the box is working on maintaining upper torso balance.

Hang Ten

This is similar to the preceding activity, except that the person in the box is standing (not sitting), trying to maintain balance while being pushed or pulled along.

Box Balance

Place a large box on a child's head and have the child walk around, trying not to lose the box.

Box Dance

Play some music while the child stands with both feet in a box. Your player jiggles, bounces, and two-steps around, making the box jiggle and move around, too.

Box Pile

In this closely supervised game, the player piles some boxes on top of other boxes, then climbs on top of them and balances: King or Queen of the Mountain!

Box Walk

Obtain some sturdy, coated cardboard boxes used for shipping produce. Turn them upside down and let your player walk from one box to another. Put them close together at first, then increase the distance between boxes.

Box Jumping

A delicate little 4-year-old girl named Mona came up with this game, which I thought exceedingly brave of her. She'd take a running start toward an empty cardboard box and then jump into it, maintaining an upright balance.

Once in the box, she'd start jumping around, causing the box to move forward. The other children were only too glad to imitate her idea!

Games to Enhance Motor Planning

Mashed Box

Place three small cardboard boxes on the floor to form an obstacle course. (Shoe and boot boxes work well for younger children.) The first two boxes are right-side up; the third box is upside down. The children jump into the first box and then jump out of it, run around the second box two times, then jump *on* the third box, mashing it. (Kids tend to like that one the best!) The mashed box then becomes the second box (the one they run around) and the second box takes the third spot. Continue until all boxes are demolished.

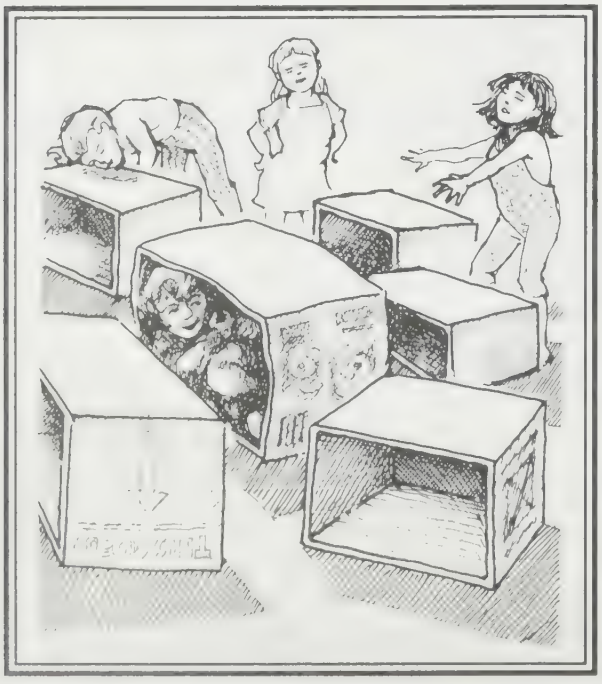


Figure 81. Box tuck.

Games to Enhance Flexibility

Box Tuck

See how tightly players can curl up their bodies to fit inside different-sized boxes (figure 81). Can they make themselves small enough that the box could be turned upside down or on its side with them in it? Could one player find another among several overturned boxes?

Game to Enhance Imagination

What Else?

Have your player imagine the different things a box could be. A spaceship? A donkey cart? A boat? A carnival ride? Ask the child to mime the movements for each idea.

Wheels

Draw wheels on the sides of a box, or cut circles from another cardboard box and attach them. This prop can then become whatever your player imagines—a stagecoach, a racing car, a donkey cart, a mini-van—and a whole scenario can be made up to go along with it.

Games to Enhance Group Playing

Box Cram

Let the students see how many bodies they can fit into one of those large boxes that refrigerators come in.

This is the kind of activity that would seem too uncomfortable to bother with, but children enjoy it a lot. (Wasn't there a fad some time ago where college students tried to see how many could fit into a phone booth?)

The activity serves the purpose of being close to others and being touched without the risks of having to commit oneself to a relationship!!

Box Push

If you have a smooth floor and empty cardboard boxes, this game naturally sprouts up. The kids each grab a box and run madly around the room, pushing their boxes ahead of them. When kids go at it on their own, without directions, they seem to be just pushing their boxes, running, making sounds, and weaving in and out and around each other. Everyone seems to be having a grand old time. To the adults on the sidelines, it all looks rather purposeless; but then, having to have a purpose for things is probably a sign of age anyway.

Jukebox

In one side of a large refrigerator-sized box, cut a flap that can be opened from inside the box. Make a slit beside the flap. One student crawls inside the box; another student slips a piece of paper into the slot, giving the name of a song. The student inside lifts the flap and sings the requested song.

Paid TV

A client named Alden plays this game at home. He cuts a squarish hole in the side of a large box such as refrigerators or washing machines come in. The hole is a TV screen, and Alden performs "on TV" for his family. No fool, he also cuts a slot in the box where they insert money to make the show begin!

Turtle

A smiling little girl named Maddy figured out that if you put a box over your crawling body, you turn into a moving turtle. Since she was the youngest in a class of children ranging in age from her 4 years to 10 years, she found that moving around as a turtle was a fun way to be part of the group, yet she didn't have to interact on a day when she was feeling less social than usual.

With a whole group of small children, you could turn everyone into turtles, making a peep hole in the front end of each box so you won't end up with a turtle version of "bumper cars."

Jukebox Quiz

Prepare the jukebox as in the above activity. Have children close their eyes while you select someone to enter the box. The person inside the jukebox does not lift the flap in this game, but simply sings a song or says some words. The other students must guess who is inside the box. Have children take turns being in the box.

I saw a street musician do a version of Jukebox *at Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco. He was a big hit.*

9
Games to Play with Unmatched Socks

Finding a ball when you need one can be a challenge in itself. Balls have a tendency to roll away when no one is looking, not unlike the mysterious socks that disappear midst the washing and drying cycle. Now you can combine two problems and make one solution—sockballs! Take two or three unmatched socks, depending on their thickness, and roll them up to make a sockball (figure 82). Put beans in the toes and tie off the top to make an instant beanbag, or use coarse sand to make weights. Gravel that is sold for use in fish tanks is also a good filler for the beanbags, because you can throw the whole thing in the washing machine. (If you use beans, they tend to sprout after washing!)

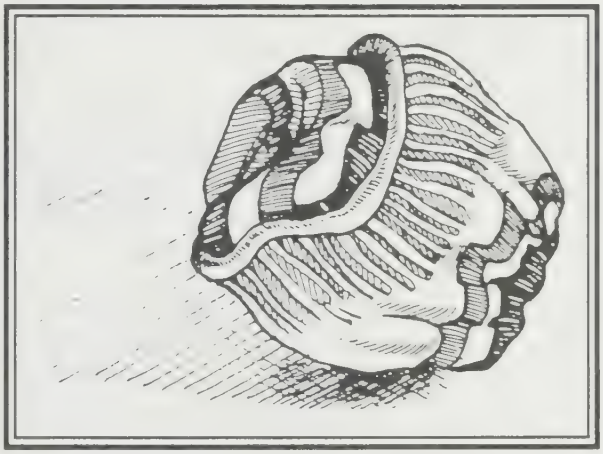


Figure 82. Rolled socks make a sockball.

There are many games to play with these different types of sockballs that increase skill levels. And with games like *Hit the Buns and Run,* there is also the satisfaction of knowing that we've outsmarted the unmatched sock problem: after all, we get them in the end.

(Activities marked with a checkmark are also listed under **Games to Play with Newspaper** and use scrunched-up newspaper as a ball instead of a sockball.)

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Hit the Buns and Run

Lay sockballs around on the floor (don't use beanbags stuffed with beans or sand). When someone shouts, "Go for the buns," everyone runs for the nearest sockball and aims it at the nearest gluteus maximus. Players can give themselves a score for each hit but they will probably be too busy running toward the next sockball while trying to protect their own rear to bother.

You'll know when the game is over: players will be lying exhausted—panting, but happy—on the floor or ground.

Figure 83. Schmertz ball.

This is an especially good game to play when there are motorically slower children in the group, because there is so much action, one can't tell who is doing what and how accurately it is being done. Everyone is just having fun, and sockballs are so soft that no one gets hurt.

If you want the players to be more accurate in their throwing, change the name of the game to *Hit the Knee and Flee, Hit the Back and Attack, Hit the Arm and Do No Harm, Hit the Leg and Make 'Em Beg, Hit the Fingers if They Linger,* or *Hit the Neck and Not the Deck.*

Ask the players to come up with their own little ditty.

Schmertz Ball

Roll up a couple of socks and tuck them into the toe of a tube or knee sock. One by one, players swing this sock creation around their heads, let go, and see how far it can be thrown (figure 83). Players can throw it to each other or throw it alone and measure the distance thrown each time. They can aim at a target and learn how to really direct a schmertz ball.

Sock Weights

Stuff two plastic bags of sand into the toe of a long tube sock. Close the cuff of the sock with a string or a needle and thread, and distribute a bag of sand to each end. (It is a good idea to use one plastic bag inside another plastic bag so that if one bag is ripped, the other one will keep the sand in place.) Tie a string above each bag of sand to keep the sand in place at either end of the sock.

Figure 84. Sock weights.

Use the sock weights like dumbbells for upper body strength, or drape over an ankle or a thigh for resistive leg lifts (figure 84).

Sock Knee Pads

Make knee pads out of socks so that young children learning how to crawl will have extra reinforcement on their knees.

Cut the foot off the sock (use that for stuffing other sockballs) and trim the cuff to an appropriate length. Pull the cuff up over the child's knee. The thicker the sock, the better the reinforcement. Use socks with a tight weave so they won't stretch out quickly or come off while crawling.

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

✓ *A Step at a Time*

Face your student, standing fairly close, and toss the sockball back and forth. Every time you catch and throw the ball successfully, take one step back. Continue this game until you are so far apart for the skill level involved that you or your partner can no longer catch it; then each of you take one step toward each other. This way, you end the game with success. Note how many steps you were able to take (for example, "We took ten steps away from each other!") so that at the next session, you can try for 11.

For beginners, sit down to play the game, and fanny-walk backward after each successful catch.

✓ *Throw-a-Thon*

How many ways can people throw a sockball to each other?

- See how many times the sockball can be thrown back and forth without being dropped.
- One player throws the sockball high and overhand; the other player throws low and underhand at the same time. Alternate who throws it high or low with each turn. Both could toss underhand or both overhand.
- One player throws two sockballs at the same time to a partner who catches them both (start close together).
- Each player has two sockballs; they throw and catch at the same time. One person could throw the sockballs a second later than the other.

Have players generate other ideas and show them to the group for the others to imitate.

✓ *Upside Down Roll*

Partners bend over from the waist and toss the sockball back and forth to each other between their legs. This stance also works on balance and is a good way to get fresh, oxygenated blood to the brain!

✓ *Dunk Ball*

Lay out a variety of targets: a rope coil, a large hoop, a wastebasket, a dishpan, a bucket, a pot, a coffee can, a shoe, a garden hose coil, an inner tube, a bicycle tire, a rock, a street sign, or a hole dug in the ground.

Give each player three or more sockballs to use for each turn, and indicate how far away the players must stand to throw. The idea is to see how many sockballs they can get in the various targets, just like at a carnival (figure 85).

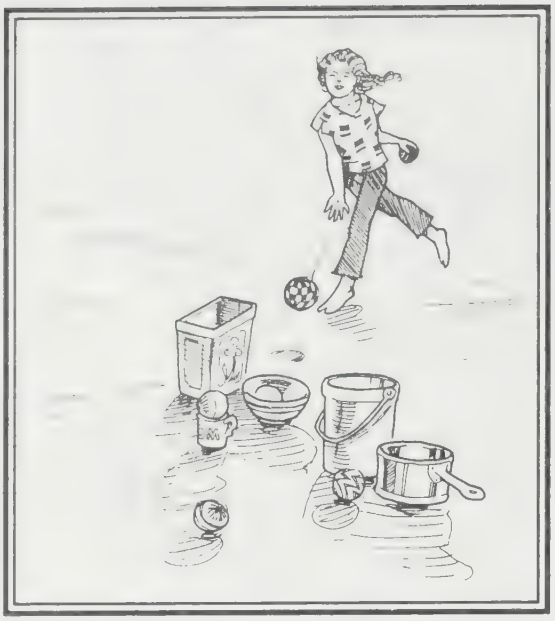


Figure 85. Dunk ball.

Introduce a large variety of targets to encourage kids to make up their own eye-hand coordinating games on their own.

The targets can be laid out in a long line so that several players can throw at once. Note which targets are easier for which players. When you work with a child individually, you can concentrate on increasing the personal challenge.

Target Ball

Your players need only sockballs and some targets.

- Have children build a pyramid of aluminum cans and knock them down.
- Line up a row of empty cereal boxes and have players knock them down one by one, or line up the boxes as if they were dominoes and knock them all down in one fell swoop.
- Build a tower of empty half-gallon milk cartons and ask your students to knock them down.
- Ask someone to be a moving target for the thrower!

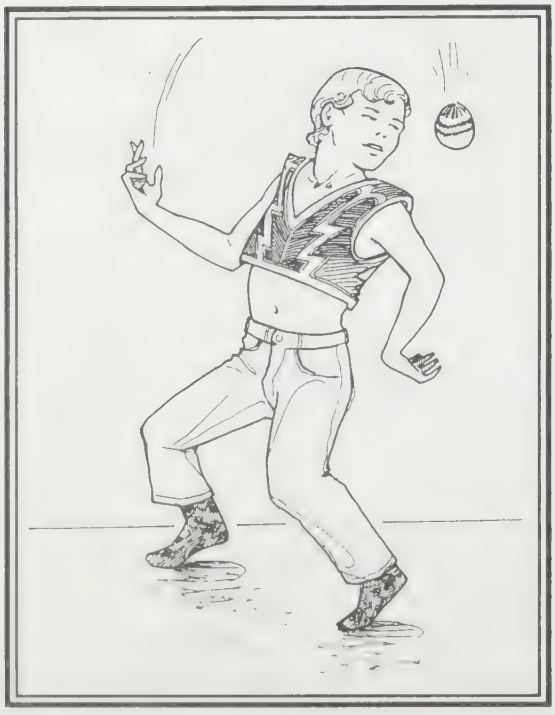


Figure 86. Solitary ball toss.

✓ *Stair Toss*

Throw a flattened sockball onto different steps of a staircase. Place a reward such as raisins, nuts, or fruit on each step for added incentive; the child gets to eat whatever is on the step where the sockball lands. For variety, children might want to call out the number of the step they are trying to hit.

✓ *Solitary Ball Toss*

Give each player one sockball and a series of instructions on how to throw (figure 86). Some are easy to do, others might seem impossible. Don't dwell too long on any one of the activities—just enough to give every player the chance to try each one. Even the almost impossible activities are fun to try. In other words, keep the pace lively!

Ask your player to try the following activities with a sockball.

- Throw low and catch with two hands.
- Throw higher and catch with two hands.
- Throw very high and catch with both hands.
- Start low and catch with one hand.
- Catch it underhand, first with the right hand, then the left.
- Catch it overhand. Switch hands.
- Throw low and clap once, catch with two hands, then one hand.
- Throw high and clap twice (or three or more times), then catch with one or two hands.
- Throw the sockball way up, twirl around in a circle, then catch it.
- Throw from one hand to another with eyes open and then eyes closed.
- Throw it up, as always, but catch it when it is only 4″ from the floor.
- Lie down, throw the sockball, stand up, and catch it.
- Walk and keep the sockball in the air using just the backs of the hands.
- Throw and catch standing on one foot.
- Throw and catch with one eye (or both eyes) closed.
- How far can you throw the sockball?
- Place a sockball on your head, bend your head forward, and catch the sockball with your hands.
- Put a sockball on top of your head. This time, bend the head backward and catch the sockball behind you.
- Bounce the sockball off the wall and catch it.
- Bounce the sockball off the wall and clap or twirl around before catching it.
- Bounce the sockball off your hip or knee and catch it.

Bleach Ball

Remove the bottom from an empty bleach or plastic gallon milk jug, leaving the handle on. Have players hold these upside down and toss a sockball back and forth, catching **and throwing** using the container (figure 87). You can also use an upside-down traffic cone.

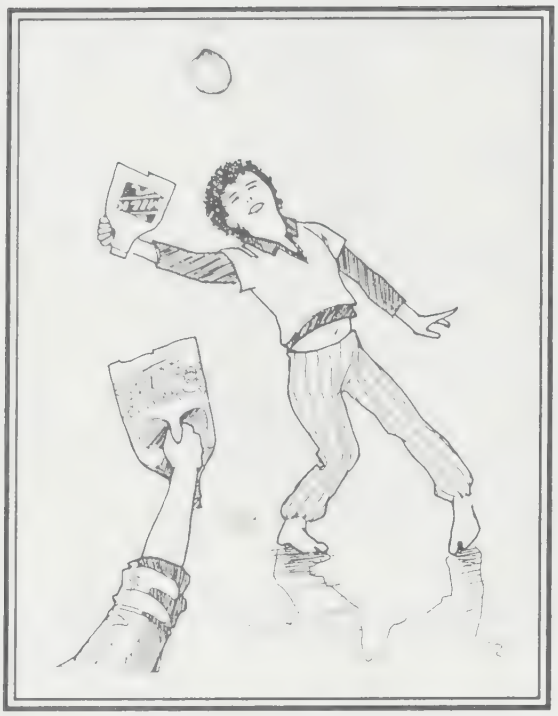


Figure 87. Bleach ball.

✓ *Baseball*

Good old American baseball can be played with a sockball and newspaper bats. (The thicker the bat, the firmer it is, so construct the bat with your child's skill level in mind.) The sockball can also be made larger or smaller depending upon how many socks you use.

✓ *Golf*

Golf can be played using the same equipment as baseball, but with the newspaper bat in a different position. Tape newspaper squares to the floor for "holes." The object is to see how many strokes it takes to get a sockball from one square to another.

✓ *Croquet*

Open both ends of several cardboard boxes and lay these on the floor (these are the "wickets"). Provide newspaper bats for the mallets. Have children play croquet and see who can get a sockball through all the wickets first.

If your players are more advanced, use open-ended milk cartons instead of cardboard boxes for the wickets.

Figure 88. Goal kicks.

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Sockball Kicks

Pair children up and have them kick a sockball back and forth. This activity also works with the players in a circle. Start the children close together or in a tight circle and, with each successful kick, have them take a step backward.

Goal Kicks

Have children see how many kicks it takes to go from one goal to the other (figure 88). (The goals could be newspaper sections or any other target.) See if the players can cover the distance with fewer kicks each time.

✓ *Soccer Ball*

Have your players dribble sockballs across the room using the insides of the feet. Next, have players try using the outsides of their feet. Make sure both the left and right feet are used.

Games to Enhance Laterality

All activities listed under **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination** are useful in working on laterality.

Schmertz Ball

See under **Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills.**

Sock Weights

See under **Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills.**

Dunk Ball

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Target Ball

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Stair Toss

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Games to Enhance Balance

✓ *Kangaroo Ball*

Put a sockball on the floor. Have the player squat down and pick it up between the knees, then jump around like a kangaroo (figure 89). Have the child do short little jumps, then long jumps. Jump sideways. If there are other kangaroos around, have them try to dislodge the others' sockballs by bumping them with their hips.

Figure 89. Kangaroo ball.

Back Race

Players bend over and place sockballs on their backs. Ready? Race!

One of the advantages of the sockball is that it lies flatter and is less likely to roll than a real ball.

Figure 90. Balance ball.

Balance Ball

See how long a sockball can be balanced on the head, an arm, a shoulder, a knee, the back of the hands, or an elbow (figure 90). See how long it can be balanced while walking. See how long it can be done while running. How about racing?

Sock Run

A pair of socks (they don't have to match) and a slick wood or linoleum floor make a challenging balancing combination for the child who has some sense of balance but needs additional work on this skill. Have the child run a ways to build up speed, then slide. The object is to stay upright until the end!

As a group game, this could resemble a bumper car derby. If you do it in a group, make sure you have children who can tolerate spills and falls.

Games to Enhance Motor Planning

Figure 91. Sunday stroll.

Sockball Path

Lay different-colored sockballs on the floor in a random pattern. See how quickly players can hop or jump from one to the other, picking up each ball along the way. See if they can do it with barely a pause to pick up the ball. Have them try and swoop it up instead.

Variation: Call out the sequence to jump (for example, "Jump first to the lime green ball, then to the forest green one, and then to the pale blue one").

Sunday Stroll

Everyone puts socks on hands as if they were lovely gloves. The players are ladies and gentlemen going on a stroll together (figure 91).

Pairs or groups of three must walk side by side at exactly the same speed without touching. Each person takes a turn being the leader and setting the pace. As the leader changes the pace, the others must stay in step by speeding up or slowing down as needed without necessarily looking at the leader but by feeling the movement beside them.

Games to Enhance Rhythm

Rhythm Balls

The first person establishes a rhythm sound, such as "be . . . bop . . . beee . . ." (repeat) "be . . . bop . . . beee. . . ." On the "bop," the first person tosses a sockball to the next player who also repeats the rhythm and passes it on the "bop" sound. Players try to maintain the rhythm. This game can easily be played with just two people.

Variation: Use a physical movement instead of sound: hop on the right foot, hop on the left, throw while jumping on both feet, for example. The other player does the same thing.

Players can take turns making up new sounds or movements for the others to imitate.

Sheet Target

See variation under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination** in Chapter 12.

Hot Sock/Cold Sock

See under **Games to Enhance Group Playing.**

Throw-a-Thon

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Games to Enhance Flexibility

Knee Sock Stretch

Have a player hold a knee sock stretched out overhead (figure 92). Then, holding both ends, the player brings the sock down behind her back and steps over it. The player then brings the sock up in front and does it again. Next time, reverse the direction.

If you don't have a sock long enough, tie two or more together.

My daughter Roxanne told me recently that while walking with two close friends, they discovered that they all walked along at different paces. Randy took long strides, Roxanne smaller steps, and Naj was somewhere in the middle. So they walked along saying, "Let's do Randy's pace" and imitated his rhythm, then alternated with imitating the other two. It was clearly a happy memory for her.

You might consider this when grouping children for Sunday Stroll *and purposely choose a trio of children with different sizes and rhythms (that is, group the more active child with one who is slower, or form a trio made up of an endomorph, an ectomorph, and a mesomorph).*

Physically experiencing someone else's movements is good for developing empathy, and having others imitate your movement is empowering!

Figure 92. Knee sock stretch.

Games to Enhance Imagination

Sock an Attitude

Instead of the regular old ball game, add a bit of spice to the game: ask your players to throw the ball with an attitude, depicting a specific feeling (figure 93).

Figure 93. Sock an attitude.

- One player is the leader and throws the ball as if she were feeling mean, cool, tired, scared, secretive, bossy, super strong, sick, "spacey," etc. Others in the circle imitate the attitude in their own style.
- The players have secret attitudes they adopt when throwing the ball. Others have to guess what that attitude is.

Sound Catch

Seat players in a circle. The player with the sockball makes a sound and tosses the ball to another. Upon catching it, this player quickly makes another sound and throws the ball. Ask the players to make any sound that comes to mind, rather than concentrating on preparing for the task. There are no right or wrong sounds. Any sound is perfectly okay, even those that sound suspiciously like someone breaking wind. Spontaneity, speed, and keeping the rhythm are the goals, along with, of course, catching the ball.

Once the rhythm and speed are comfortable, suggest that, instead of sounds, participants call out names of colors, friends, states, trees, flowers, actors, teachers, rock singers, songs, and so on.

Sock Puppets

Stuff a sock with cotton, scrap material, or other socks and draw a face on the toe with felt markers. If your learner is able, let him sew on buttons for eyes and yarn for hair. Make a few of these puppets and put on a show.

Games to Enhance Group Playing

Hot Sock/Cold Sock

Have the children form a circle and toss the sockball around from person to person. One person is designated as the caller. When the caller says, "Hot Sock," the players toss the sockball overhand to each other as

quickly as possible. If the caller says, "Cold Sock," the players toss it underhand to each other, as gently and slowly as possible until the next command is given.

If the group is older, add "Crooked Ball" to the repertoire: have them lift a leg and toss the sockball under the leg to another player. Introduce new variations, such as "Twirly Ball": after catching the sockball, the player must twirl around before throwing it. There could be a "Hot Twirly Ball" as well as a "Cold Twirly Ball."

Sound Ball: Before throwing the sockball, the thrower makes a silly sound. Advanced players could use sequences such as "[Sound] Hot Twirly Ball," where the players would catch the ball, twirl around, make a sound, and throw it quickly overhand!

The same game can be played while sitting if there is a problem with balancing and catching at the same time. Variations for the seated version are described below.

Open Scissors: Legs have to be open ("abducted" in therapist talk, "second position" in dancer talk).

Close Scissors: Legs are closed and straight.

Tailor Type: Legs are crossed. If you are working on laterality, you could elaborate with "Tailor Type Right," which means right leg crossed in front, or "Tailor Type Left," with the left leg in front. This should make for some interesting movement when playing the game if you call for one "Tailor Type" quickly after another and then back again.

One player came up with the idea for Teeth Catch: *the sockball had to be caught with and thrown from the teeth. It wasn't a very accurate way to go about catching and throwing, but it sure got everyone's focused attention!*

One Hand Catch: Put one hand behind the back while catching with the other. There could be "Right Hand Back" and "Left Hand Back."

Ask the players to come up with other ideas.

Human Pinball

The group stands in a circle facing outward, with one person standing in the center of the circle. Players bend over and shoot sockballs between their legs to hit the moving target player in the center (figure 94). The person who hits the target player gets to stand in the center next.

Figure 94. Human pinball.

Figure 95. Shield ball.

I played Shield Ball *with my younger daughter's class when she was in elementary school. The teacher was uncomfortable with the wildness and changed the rules so that everyone waited quietly for a "1—2—3—throw" command before each throw. I had to admire the new tidiness of the game, but as my daughter Marissa pointed out later, it lost a lot of the fun.*

Figure 96. Caboose ball.

Shield Ball

The group stands in concentric circles, the outside circle facing inward and a few people in the center forming an inner circle facing outward. Each center person holds a shield (one side of a cardboard box). People on the outside of the circle try to hit people on the inside with the sockballs (figure 95). People on the inside try to protect themselves by deflecting the balls with their shields. When a person is hit, that person trades places with the hitter, moving to the outer circle and giving the hitter the shield. If the person who was hit doesn't know who threw the ball, he can just drop the shield and move to the outside of the circle. The hitter picks up the shield and moves to the inner circle. Several sockballs are used, so the game is fast and everyone gets to be inside the circle many times.

Be prepared for a bit of chaos as balls go flying, shields are dropped, and some kids run to the inside circle while others are running to the outside circle.

Caboose Ball

This is played like *Shield Ball,* but the three or four players in the middle form a small train. The engine is the only one holding a shield. The only legal place to hit the train is at the "caboose" end of the caboose. Therefore, it is up to the engine to move the train around to protect the caboose's rear as much as possible (figure 96).

When the caboose is hit, that person becomes the engine and the next person in line is the new caboose. When everyone in the train line has had a turn being the caboose and the engine, a new group of players becomes the next train.

Dragon Tail

Players stand in line and hold onto the waist of the person in front. A knee sock dangles loosely from the belt or waistband of the

last person in line. The front person in line tries to grab the sock while everyone holds on for the chase (figure 97).

Players without waistbands or belts can make a belt by tying together a few socks, wrapping that around the waist, then tucking the sock tail into the sock belt.

Figure 97. Dragon tail.

✓ *Run the Gauntlet*

Two rows of players face each other, standing about five feet apart. Each player is armed with a sockball. Another set of players stands at one end of this corridor, ready to run between the double file of students. The armed players throw their sockballs at the runners. The players who are not hit get to run the gauntlet again. The ones who were hit take a place among the throwers.

Ask the throwers to aim at a particular body part: the back of the legs, the small of the back, the upper arm, the toes, the top of the tush, and so on.

Go Fish

This is played just like the card game "Fish" except that children play with single socks rather than cards. This is the game to play before making sockballs to see if there are any socks that could be matched (and returned to the drawer) and which ones are truly unmatched singles.

Deal out a "hand" of six socks to each player. The rest go in a bag. One player asks, "Does anyone have a green sock with blue hearts on it?" The others either give up the mate or tell the player to "go fish" in the bag. All the socks left over are made into sockballs.

This game is also good for language development and noticing details.

Figure 98. Sockless tag.

Sockless Tag

Everyone has a sock dangling from the back of their waistbands. (Those without waistbands can tie a few socks together to make belts.) The players run around and try to grab others' socks (figure 98). Children keep any socks they grab. The game ends when everyone's sock has been taken. Those holding socks in their hands throw the socks into the air. Everyone grabs one, tucks an end into the back of their waistband, and the game begins again.

Hit the Buns and Run

See under **Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills.** (See figure 99.)

Figure 99. Hit the buns and run.

Baseball

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Golf

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Croquet

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Sock Run

See under **Games to Enhance Balance.**

Rhythm Balls

See under **Games to Enhance Rhythm.**

Sock an Attitude

See under **Games to Enhance Imagination.**

Sound Catch

See under **Games to Enhance Imagination.**

10
Games to Play with Lids

Lids are what is left over after you have recycled the glass jars. Lids are those nice plastic tops that come with coffee cans and margarine tubs that seem to be around long after their bottoms have been discarded. Lids are those seemingly useless things that come atop yogurt and cottage cheese containers. Lids are also bottle caps that have always found their way into a kid's pocket. Here are some game reasons to save these lids.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Lid Jump

This one takes coordination on the part of the teacher/therapist. The player jumps up with legs apart and you throw a lid between the child's legs (figure 100).

Once the player gets the idea, try throwing first and having your learner jump at just the right moment.

Figure 100. Lid jump.

Large Lid Jump

Scoot a large plastic lid (from the top of a five-gallon bucket) across the floor toward the player(s). Their job is to jump over it as it comes their way.

Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills

Matching Lids

Place a wide variety of jars with lids in front of your learner. Take the lids off and toss them together, mixing them all up. Then see how quickly the player can put the right lids on the right jars.

Lid Sliders

Use metal bottle caps from soft-drink bottles or the plastic caps from mineral-water bottles. Two contestants sit across from each other with a flat, smooth table top between them. They slide the bottle caps back and forth across the table. Variations are described below.

- Slide a cap back and forth to each other.
- Use two caps and slide to each other at the same time.
- Slide caps toward each other, trying to have them hit in the middle.
- Position two caps as "goal posts." The player tries to slide a cap between the goal posts.
- Make a line of caps and have the player try to hit each cap and knock it out of line.
- Make a line of caps (pennies work well for this also) with at least an inch of space between them and have the player slide a cap through each of the spaces in turn. It is a good idea to make each succeeding space progressively smaller.

Have the players try "flicking" the caps instead of sliding them, using the thumb and middle finger.

Lid Pictures

Use plastic lids such as the kind that come atop coffee cans and peanut butter tubs. Punch holes in the top using a hole puncher or an ice pick. Thread a large darning or tapestry needle with some embroidery floss or yarn and have the worker go in and out of the holes to make a colorful design or picture on the lid. Make the hole pattern as complicated or as simple as is appropriate for that child.

Lid Roll

Have the child place a lid on its edge, give it a little push, and watch it roll. It can be rolled at a target or just rolled to see how far it can go without falling over.

Have the child then try rolling a lid with each hand at the same time.

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

Flying Saucers and Other Games

Both plastic and metal lids can be used for games of throwing.

- Use them like a flying saucer or a discus.
- See how high they can be thrown, or how far.
- See how accurately the child can throw a lid. Make a target for the child to hit.
- See how straight a lid can be thrown, or how much of a curve can be put into the throw.

Lid Hits

Have the thrower toss something up in the air (such as a soft drink can, a yogurt container, or whatever else is available), then try to hit it with a lid (figure 101).

Figure 101. Lid hits.

Lid Catch

Have the player hold a lid in each hand. Toss something in the air (a newspaper ball, an aluminum can, or an ice cream or yogurt container), and have the child catch it between the two lids.

To increase the challenge, have the player walk while catching.

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Lid Flip

Lay out some lids and containers (yogurt lids with their containers balanced on top work well), and have your player flip the lid with a toe, dislodging the container. Lay out a series of these and see how quickly the child can flip the containers off the lids.

Double Lids

The player kicks a lid with one foot, then tries to kick a second lid with the other foot so that it hits the first lid (figure 102).

Figure 102. Double lids.

Lid Race

See under **Games to Enhance Group Playing.**

Lid Kicks

See under **Games to Enhance Group Playing.**

Games to Enhance Laterality

Any of the games that involve kicking a lid with one foot or throwing a lid with one hand are excellent for working on laterality.

Encourage children to use both sides of their bodies so that they can see and feel the difference. If children are weaker on one side, they like the chance to show off their stronger side as well as work on their weaker side.

Games to Enhance Balance

Lid Skating

Players stand on large lids and scoot and skate their way forward.

Head Balance

How many lids can children balance on their heads? Start with one, keep walking, add another and another and another. . . .

Games to Enhance Rhythm

Lid Shakers

Tape together two lids and fill the resulting container with a small amount of rice, beans, pennies, shells, or whatever will make a noise when shaken. Give everyone a shaker, then have the musicians copy your rhythm. Start with a simple 1/2 beat and work up. For example, if you are asking them to copy a pattern of three beats in a row before a pause, change the stressed beat occasionally. Sometimes emphasize the first beat, sometimes the middle or the last. This activity can be as simple or as complicated as you need.

Figure 103. Lid phone.

Game to Enhance Imagination

Lid Phone

The player pretends that a lid is an earphone and a stick is a microphone. The child holds the lid over one ear (as a singer does when making a recording) and sings into the "mike" (figure 103).

Games to Enhance Group Playing

Lid Touch

Children are scattered around the room; the person who is It kicks or scoots a lid around on the floor. The first player to be touched by the lid becomes It and takes over the kicking of the lid.

Variation: When the lid touches someone's foot, that child begins to kick another lid around the room. Now there are two people who are It. When another person is touched, there are three Its, and so on, until everyone has a lid. *Lid Race,* below, follows naturally.

Lid Race

Starting in a line at one end of the room, the players see who can kick a lid from one end of the room to the other the fastest without losing control of the lid.

Lid Kicks

Standing side by side in a line, players take turns seeing how far they can kick their lids. In the first round, have children use the right foot; the second time, have them use the left foot. Players can see which is their stronger leg.

11
GAMES TO PLAY WITH WOOD

These games require wooden objects that are easy to find, such as clothespins, toothpicks, doweling, chairs, tables, two-by-fours, broomsticks, and leftovers from a lumber mill.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Obstacle Course

Set up an obstacle course using ordinary objects such as chairs and tables, plus a balance beam (see instructions for making a balance beam under **Games to Enhance Balance**). Make up a story to go along with the course (figure 104).

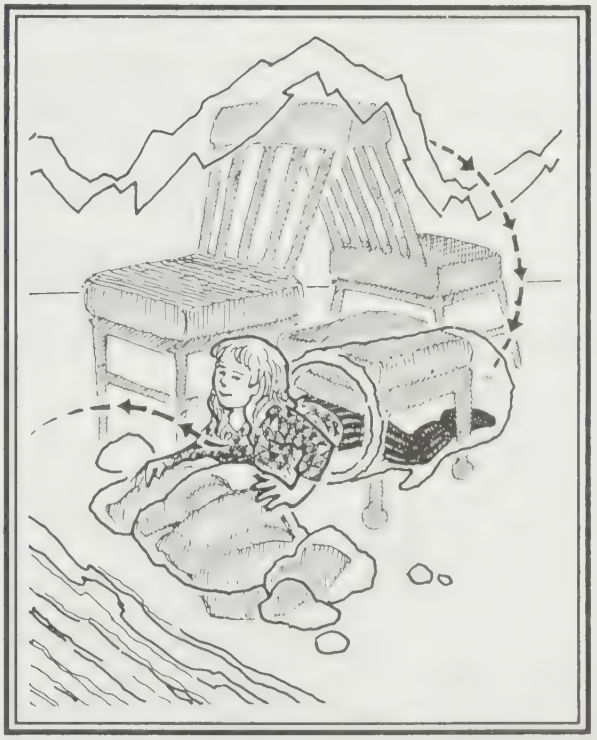


Figure 104. Obstacle course.

Example: This child went on a search for frogs and had to go over a mountain (climb up and over a desk or table), jump over a river (a coat lying on the floor), go under a fence (a desk or a table), and go between the trees (two rows of chairs facing each other) until she came to a bridge (the balance beam) where she found the frogs (chalkboard erasers) sunning themselves. She crossed the bridge, picking up the frogs as she went along.

Chair Push

This game requires a smooth floor surface and a weighted chair. The learner's job is to push the weighted chair from one point to another. The weight on the chair can be anything from a box of books to another child. The path can be a straight or curved line marked on the floor with masking tape. There could be musical accompaniment to cue the learner when to stop and start.

One consistent factor in this activity is that, no matter what variation you use, it will enhance strength and endurance!

Chair Step

Another strengthening activity is to have your worker step up on a chair, then down, repeating this motion again and again. Whether you use a stool, a low chair, or a regular-sized chair depends on the skill level and the size of your worker. See how many times the climber can get up and down in a given period of time.

Classroom Games

If you are a therapist and find that you need to mainstream a child in a classroom setting, or if you are a teacher and find that the children need five minutes of movement after a long period of sitting, try these classroom games. Before starting, have children clear off all desk areas.

- Children lie on their desks on their backs and spin around like break dancers.
- Children kneel on chairs, place hands flat on their desks, and do push-ups.
- Children step from floor to chair to desk and back down again as many times as they can in one minute.
- Children walk around the room, weaving in and out of the desks and chairs without touching any of them.

Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills

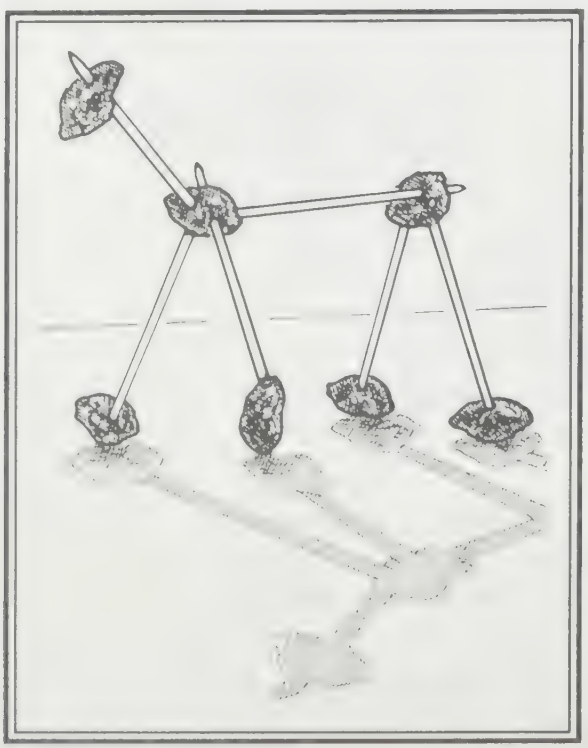


Figure 105. Toothpick sculptures.

Toothpick Designs

Both you and your player use a set of toothpicks to make designs for each other to copy. The designs could be animals, people, flowers, abstract patterns, or simple geometric shapes. This is also a good game for spatial awareness.

Toothpick Cake

This game requires a piece of clay or a plastic foam block, the kind that is used for packing. If you are outside, a mound of damp dirt will do just fine. Have children put the toothpick "candles" into the "cake," making a lot of little holes. When the toothpicks are removed, your players put them back into the same holes. Don't forget to sing and blow the candles out. Got any pretend presents?

You can also play this game with nails, sticks, or pieces of doweling.

Toothpick Sculptures

Insert cut-up toothpicks into whole raisins to make sculptures (figure 105). These could be abstract designs or models of animals. You can also use softened dried peas as the joining material.

Toothpick Throw

Picking up tiny toothpicks and throwing them into a container is a useful and simple fine motor activity.

Dowel Balance

Have a child hold two ½″ dowels (or whatever size you have), one in each hand, and balance a third on top of those. Have the player try to walk while balancing this third dowel or flip it and catch it with the other two (figure 106).

Figure 106. Dowel balance.

Cup Hook Challenge

Screw cup hooks into a piece of wood. Give your learner some washers or bread wrapper tabs to put on each hook. You can use different colors or sizes of washers or tabs and ask the child to sort them by color (all the red tabs on one hook, blue on another) or by size.

Wood Collage

Ask a cabinet maker or an industrial arts teacher for lathed scraps, planing curls, button molds, wood scraps, and sawdust.

Let your learner make a collage or a sculpture out of these. Use white glue or wood glue.

Clothespin Pick-up

Because fine-motor movements include the small muscles of the foot, ask your workers to pick up clothespins with their toes and drop them into a bucket.

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

Clothespin Drop

Have your player drop clothespins into a container. The variables are the size of the container and the height of the drop. The easiest would be to drop them into a coffee can from a kneeling position. The hardest would

be into an open-spouted milk carton while standing on a chair. Other containers include plastic shampoo bottles, yogurt containers, paper cups, toilet paper rolls, and juice cans.

Clothespin Throw

Make a target (such as a wastebasket or a piece of rope stretched out on the floor). Have your worker throw clothespins to the rope or into the basket.

Clothespin Slip

Slip old-fashioned clothespins (the kind that have a slit up the middle) over the sides of a can. Ask your player to take them off the sides and drop them inside the can, then take them out and slip them back onto the side.

Rings and Things

Insert a piece of dowel into a lump of clay, a floral sponge, a can of sand, or anything to keep it upright. The object of this activity is for the children to put things on the dowel. Beginners can start with canning rings or circles made out of cardboard.

Cut circles from the sides of milk cartons and make different-sized holes in the pieces. The smaller the hole, the harder the game; the larger the hole, the easier. Make a variety of sizes.

You could make a dowel series by starting with a dowel 1″ in diameter and decrease to a ¼″ dowel. The rings could range from round plastic bracelets or canning jar rings down to small washers.

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Stepping Blocks

Lumber yards and construction sites sometimes have "mill ends," the ends of two-by-fours that have been cut off. These make nice blocks for games, especially a stepping-stone game. Lay the blocks in a path on the floor, and have the players step from block to block, trying not to fall into the "water." Children's wooden building blocks can be used for this game, too.

Stepping Furniture

Set up a path of sturdy furniture for your player to walk on. Sometimes make a wide gap between objects so your player can stretch eye-foot awareness and balancing skills. You are always there with a helping hand, if needed, of course.

Under-Chair Kick

Place a chair right-side-up and have the player kick a ball, a can, or a newspaper ball under the bottom rungs of the chair and between the legs. Make a path of chairs, and let the player kick the ball from one chair to the next.

Change the position of the chair(s) to change the size and shape of the pathway.

Games to Enhance Spatial Sense

Chair Tunnel

Overturn some sturdy wooden chairs so they form a tunnel for your players to crawl through. This helps children learn about how much space their bodies take up. Have a reward at the end of the tunnel—anything from cereal bits to your big hug.

Chair Path

Place two rows of chairs back to back with a large aisle between them. Ask your player to walk between the chairs without touching them. Keep reducing the distance between the chairs so that the child finally must walk sideways on toes to get through without touching the chairs.

Toothpick Designs

See under **Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills.**

Tongue Depressor or Craft Stick Puzzles

Have children tape tongue depressors or craft sticks together as if they were making a raft. Then they can draw a picture on one side with felt markers. Have them make a simple, bold design or picture. Untape the sticks, scramble them, and let your learner reassemble the sticks to form the picture.

Ladder Windows

Although a ladder might not be considered a usual recyclable item, a broken one that is no longer safe for use as a ladder can make an effective piece of game equipment. Prop the ladder on its side. The players start at one end and crawl in and out of the spaces between the rungs, weaving their way down to the other end (figure 107).

Figure 107. Ladder windows.

Sing the following words to the tune of "Go Round and Round the Village" as the children crawl through the ladder: "Go in and out the window. Go in and out the window. Go in and out the window, all on a lovely day."

Games to Enhance Laterality

Clothespin Drop

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Clothespin Throw

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Clothespin Slip

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination.**

Under-Chair Kick

See under **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination.**

Games to Enhance Balance

Figure 108. Ladder games.

Ladder Games

A ladder that can no longer be used as a ladder makes a nice piece of equipment for games that work on improving balance. Lay the ladder flat on the floor and have players try the following:

- Walk on the rungs from one end to the other.
- Walk in the spaces.
- Walk on the sides of the ladder.

If the ladder is sturdy enough, prop up one or both ends on concrete blocks and do the same activities (figure 108).

Chair Walk

Place a line of sturdy chairs in a path and have the player walk from seat to seat, jumping off the last chair.

Board Walk

Place two two-by-four boards on the floor spaced approximately three feet apart. Have players walk between them (figure 109). Narrow the distance between the boards on each successive turn until the player is doing a heel-to-toe walk.

Figure 109. Board walk.

Board Shift

Lay one two-by-four board on the floor. The player walks with one foot on either side of the board, consciously shifting weight from one foot to the other during the walk.

Balance Board

The balance board is a square platform 16″ by 16″. In the middle of the underside of the board is a balance post 3″ tall and 3″, 4″, or 5″ square (figure 110). (The boards with the larger balance posts are the easiest to balance.) Glue rubber or a carpet square to the top surface of the board to prevent feet from slipping.

Games to play on a balance board:

- Sit (or stand, depending on skill level) on the board and throw beanbags (or something) into a bucket (or some other container).
- Bounce a ball around yourself.
- Blow and break bubbles.
- Move hips to music.
- Stand with feet close together, arms extended and parallel. Pivot at the hip and move from side to side. Swing arms, go back and forth from heels to toes, and do any other movement that encourages a shift in balance.
- Swat at a ball suspended at eye level in front of the board.
- Suspend a ball between two players, each on a balance board. Have them bat the ball back and forth to each other.

Figure 110. Balance board.

Balance Beam

The balance beam is a section of two-by-four measuring eight to 12 feet in length. Each end of the board is fitted into a wooden bracket which serves as a brace and prevents the board from tipping over. When fitted into place, the board is raised approximately two inches off the floor. Each bracket has a combination fitting so that the board can either be set in flat with the wide surface up, or set in on its edge with the narrow surface up (figure 111). Beginners use the 4″ surface; as the player becomes more adept, the board is turned on edge and the 2″ surface is used. For the child who is having extreme difficulty, substitute a two-by-six beam and modify the bracket appropriately.

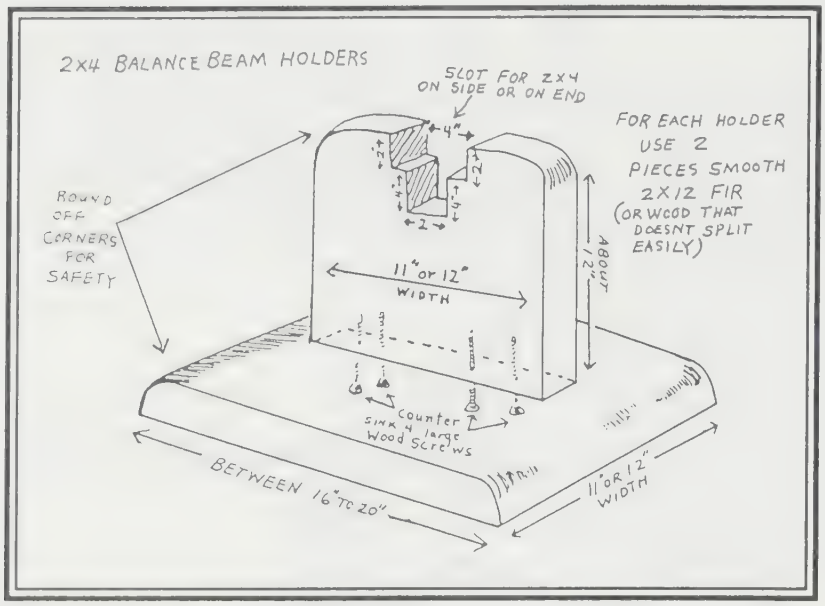

2X4 BALANCE BEAM HOLDERS
SLOT FOR 2X4 ON SIDE OR ON END
FOR EACH HOLDER USE 2 PIECES SMOOTH 2X12 FIR (OR WOOD THAT DOESNT SPLIT EASILY)
ROUND OFF CORNERS FOR SAFETY
11" OR 12" WIDTH
ABOUT 12"
4"
2"
6"
COUNTER SINK 4" LARGE WOOD SCREWS
BETWEEN 16" TO 20"
11" OR 12" WIDTH

Figure 111. Balance beam bracket.

If brackets are unavailable, prop a two-by-four board off the ground with concrete blocks, bricks, or tires (tires can add a challenging bounce).

Games to Play Using the Balance Beam

- Start the young child on a single beam on the floor, or use two balance beams side by side on the floor (one for each foot) to walk across or between. If you have only one beam, have the young player put one foot on the beam and the other on the floor and walk along. This is a silly, fun, and unscary way to first cross a beam.
- Encourage children to look straight ahead and not down at the beam by suggesting that they focus on something at eye level. That something could be you, a mirror you hold up, a picture, or a series of signs.

- Children have fun pretending that the beam is a bridge over dangerous water and they must carry something across (for example, a tray with a stack of empty cracker boxes). Each time the bridge is crossed, one more box is added to the tray. Children could carry a plastic glass of water on the tray and empty it into a bucket at the end. Have them try peanuts on a spoon or oranges on outstretched palms.
- Have a child try to pick up small objects that are scattered along the beam: a beanbag, poker chips, a trail of peanuts.
- Two children walk sideways across the beam together. A whole line of children can cross together, holding onto one another's waists.
- Walk forward, backward, or sideways.
  There are two ways to cross forward: (1) One foot leads, the other follows in a sort of shuffle step; (2) feet alternate in a regular walking pattern.
  There are two ways to cross sideways: (1) The same foot leads for each step; (2) one foot crosses over the other to take turns leading in a cross-over step.
  There are two ways to cross backward: (1) One foot leads in a shuffle-backward pattern; (2) feet alternate. Start beginners with the first method.
- Walk with only one eye open or with both eyes closed.
- Walk to the middle, turn around, and return to the start.
- Walk to the middle, do a 360-degree turn, and continue walking on to the end. Do the same move on the sideways and backward walk.
- Walk on heels or toes only.
- Walk in a squat position.
- Walk in tiny steps (toe/heel pattern) or big strides.
- Walk with beanbags on head, outstretched palms, or the backs of the hands.
- Wear only one shoe, or wear high-heeled shoes. Try wearing only one high-heeled shoe, or going barefoot.
- Carry two buckets of water to empty into a container at the end of the beam (a good *outdoor* summer game).
- Put hands on head, on hips, folded, in pockets, or folded behind the back.
- Keep a balloon aloft while walking across.
- Dribble a ball on the floor while walking across.
- Walk in a toe/heel fashion with the heel touching the toe of the other foot while going forward or backward.

Figure 112. Balance beam.

- Walk in a cross-over fashion, one leg crossing over the other leg with each step. Sometimes the leg crosses in front, sometimes behind (figure 112).
- Two players walk forward from opposite ends of the beam and try to pass each other without either of them falling off.
- Roll dice and cross the beam the number of times indicated on the dice.
- Put a hoop or a circle made from plumbing pipe over the beam. The player must go through the hoop.
- Hold a bar over the beam. The player must step over the bar while crossing the beam.
- Hold a hoop or a bar over the beam and move it up and down. The player must time movements to go over the bar or through the hoop when it is in the down position.

Balance Beam Variations:

- Remove one of the braces or supports from one end of the beam so that it forms a ramp. The players can now walk up the ramp and jump off the high end. Have them try it backward, sideways, or with eyes closed. Have them start from the high end of the ramp and run down to the low end.
- Put the brace or support in the middle of the beam for a see-saw effect (figure 113) . This is a challenging walk across the beam.
- Put two parallel balance beams at different levels and have the player cross the beams with a foot on each beam. This is good for increasing awareness of being a two-sided person.
- To promote motor planning, have the players stand beside the beam and jump over it, or stand far away from the beam, then run and jump over it.

Figure 113. Balance beam variation.

- To promote synchronized rhythm, have two or more children do the running and jumping together. Remind them to be aware of each other and try to jump at the same time, so that one person doesn't have to drag the other along.
- Squiggle under the beam prone, then supine.

Belly Board

The belly board (figure 114) is a piece of plywood 12″ wide, 18″ long, and approximately 1″ thick. (Make a smaller board for smaller children.) Screw a 2″ ball-bearing plate caster to each corner of the underside of the board, 2″ in from each edge. Drill a hole midway along each side of the board 1″ in from the edge. A rope can be tied through the front or back hole for pulling the board; cloth ties can be threaded through the side holes for "seat belts."

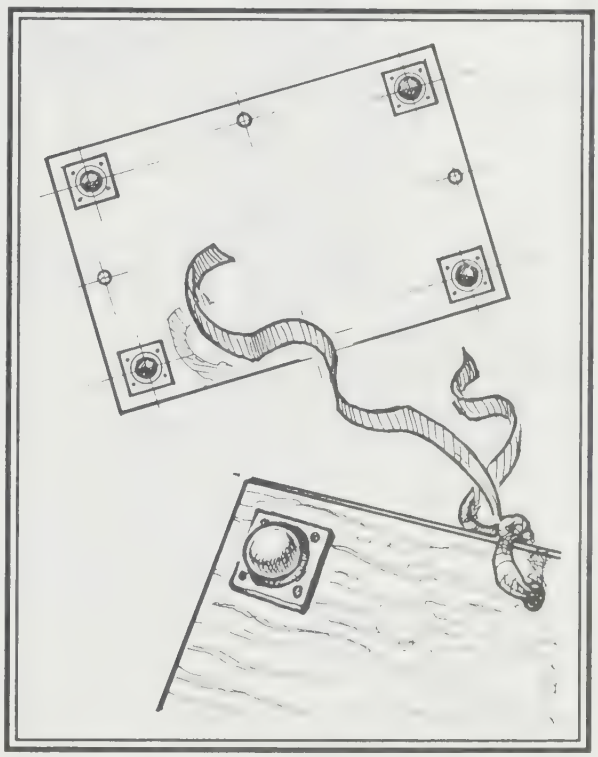


Figure 114. Belly board.

Belly Board Games

- *Sit and Ride:* A child simply sits on the belly board, strapped in with the "seat belt," if necessary, and is pulled around the room. To increase the work being done on upper torso balance, make unpredictable zigs and zags in the path, including jiggling the board. Sometimes it is good to have another child pull for socialization purposes and to increase the strength of the puller.
- *Zoom and Pick-Up:* Propelling a belly board along with one's hands while lying prone on it is a fast way to get around a room. To control the speed, add little tasks to do along the way (for example, "How many dominoes can you pick up between here and there in two minutes' time?").
- *Rope Pull-Along:* Add upper body strengthening to a belly board game by tying a rope to a stationary object. Players pull themselves along from one end of the rope to the other.
- *Sit and Pull:* The rider sits on the belly board and pulls along using leg muscles in a walking pattern. Make a path on the floor with masking tape or ropes for the player to follow. As the child becomes more capable, add curves or zigzags to the path to increase the challenge.

- *Beginning Skateboarding:* Children with pretensions of riding a real skateboard someday or who just want to pretend that they are skateboard champions right now love to stand on a belly board while they are pulled gently around the room.
- *Skate Along:* Slightly more advanced players can skate along with one foot on the board and the other foot propelling it. It is even possible to get the "skateboard" to twirl around in circles if one is so inclined.

Games to Enhance Motor Planning

Figure 115. Broomstick jump.

Broomstick Jump

Place a broomstick or a long dowel across two chairs spaced far enough apart for a player to run through, jumping over the stick (figure 115). Make sure that the backs of the chairs face the runner so that if she hits the stick with her foot, the stick will roll forward off the chair and not trip her.

Games to Enhance Rhythm

Dowel Sticks

Cut up pieces of doweling for rhythm sticks and give each player a pair to bang together. Encourage children to experiment with the different sounds that result from hitting the sticks together softly and with more vigor. Have one person make up a rhythm for another person to dance to.

Wood Instruments

Attach a knob or a small piece of wood to small, flat pieces of wood (check with furniture makers' shops or lumber yards). The children can bang these clappers together like cymbals, or you can glue sandpaper to the hitting surfaces and have the children rub the blocks together.

Games to Enhance Flexibility

Broomstick Limbo

Have two children hold the ends of a broomstick such that it is parallel to the ground. The rest of the children line up and go under the stick by bending their bodies backward while jumping their feet forward. The pole holders continue to lower the stick for each turn until the only way to get under it without touching it is for the children to slither on their backs.

Broomstick Stepping

Holding a broomstick in both hands, a player steps over the broomstick until it is behind her, then steps back over until it is in front (figure 116).

The player brings the stick up and over the head and down behind the back and legs, then steps over it and ends with the broomstick in front of the body again.

Figure 116. Broomstick stepping.

Game to Enhance Imagination

Broomstick Ride

Encourage your player to think of different ways to play with a broomstick.

- Turn the broomstick into a horse and gallop away. (This game encourages laterality as well.)
- Be a witch and fly.
- Hold the stick horizontally out in front with both hands—it is the restraining bar of a roller coaster ride.

Games to Enhance Group Playing

Broomstick Drop

This game moves quickly! Players form a circle around a person in the middle who is holding a broomstick or a long dowel. The center person calls out the name of one of the players in the circle, then drops the broomstick and joins the circle. The person whose name has been called runs to the center, grabs the broomstick before it hits the ground, then names someone else to catch it.

Mark the perimeter of the circle with a rope so that everyone is an equal distance from the person in the center. The bigger the circle, the bigger the challenge. Start small.

Broomstick Sway

While everyone is lined up on either side of a broomstick and holding onto it, one person starts to sway, setting up a rhythm. All go with the motion. This can be a very relaxing activity and can make everyone feel a part of the whole. The different players should all have a chance to change the rhythm to their own particular tune.

Going to the Store

For this game, you need a balance beam and a lot of empty grocery store items (such as cereal, margarine, and cracker boxes, milk cartons, peanut cans, salt boxes, and so on). The adult plays the parent, the players are the children, and the beam plays a bridge.

The children and the parent are at one end of the bridge, a table with all the grocery items is at the other end.

The parent gives each child instructions as to what items to get at the grocery store. How the items are requested depends on the skill level of the player. Specify both the object that you want and how the child is to cross the bridge. Ask the child to "Bring me something that . . ."

- is yellow (or any other color that is appropriate).
- starts with the letter *M* (or the sound "Mmmmm," or any other letter or sound that is appropriate).
- is big (or small).
- that there are two of (or any number; provide a tray for carrying, if needed).
- goes with milk/you put on toast (or other "goes with" ideas).
- you would eat for breakfast (lunch, dinner, or snack).

The instructions on how a child crosses the bridge to get to the store also depend on the skill level of the child:

- Cross forward.
- Cross sideways.
- Cross backward.
- Cross forward on the way to the store and backward on the way home.
- Cross backward on the way to the store and with your eyes closed on the way home.
- Cover your left eye on the way to the store and your right eye on the way home.
- Two players cross together holding a tray, one walking backward and one forward.

One of the major benefits of this game is that even though there might be a wide range of skills in the group, everyone can play on their own level and still be very much a part of the group!

Feel and Cross

As in *Going to the Store,* above, the players cross the beam to get something from a table on the other side. The difference is that this time it must match an object that they have identified by touch.

Collect a large variety of pairs of items (such as spoons, pencils, paper clips, paperback books, combs, hairbrushes, forks, bowls, fabric scraps, erasers, and so on).

The player stands on one end of the beam, hands behind the back. Place an item in the child's hands and ask him to feel it without looking at it, then remove it. The child crosses the beam and finds a similar item on the table. He can either hold up the item for everyone to see or bring it back across the beam.

As in *Going to the Store,* you can suggest various ways to cross the beam (backward, sideways, eyes closed, etc.) to work on balance and remembering sequences.

Chair Train

Line up a row of chairs and tell the children they are going on a train ride. One person is the conductor and punches holes in everyone's pretend or real tickets. Children bounce around in unison as the train "moves." Encourage them to talk about what they are seeing out the "windows."

Noncompetitive Musical Chairs

In this version of *Musical Chairs,* children run around a line of chairs that contains one fewer than the number of children. When the music stops, children attempt to find a seat. However, instead of removing the child who doesn't get a seat, all the children stay in the game and share the remaining seats. By the end, everyone is piled onto one chair. It is, you can see, a people-friendly game.

Variation: Use the original, competitive version of *Musical Chairs.* The child who does not get a seat joins the musical group who is singing for the game. You could start off with one child who sings while the children run around. The singer is the one who decides when to stop singing, to make the other players scramble for the chairs. The child who is left out at each turn then joins the singing group. The first singer becomes the conductor and directs when the group starts and stops each song. The conductor can stand behind the line of singers and touch their backs as the cue to stop singing, or the conductor can assume the traditional position in front of the group, making a horizontal movement with a conductor's baton to indicate when to stop singing.

Ladder Lift

Have the group lift a ladder up and tilt it so that one person can climb on. The group then carries this person across the room and tilts it so the person can climb down again. This game encourages strength and trust!

If carrying child and ladder requires more strength than the group has, have them simply tilt the ladder, have one person go across, then tilt the ladder the opposite way for the person to climb off.

Obstacle Course

See under **Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills.**

12
Games to Play with Other Ordinary Things

This chapter is devoted to all those other things—such as packing bubble sheets, plastic foam blocks, old bicycle tires, and torn sheets—that tend to accumulate and can be used and reused for games. The ideas in this chapter are only suggestions. Be creative in looking for other materials to recycle for therapy activities.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Packing Bubble Jump

Plastic packing material with all those little bubbles makes a great noise when kids jump on it. Even the most timid children are willing to jump off a chair onto the bubbles because even a small person can make a BIG noise.

Bicycle Tire Games

Obtain used bicycle tires from bicycle shops. Tires can perform the same function as the hoops made from garden hose and plumbing pipe described in Chapter 4.

Inner Tube Bounce

Used inner tubes from trucks can be obtained from tire stores and truck service depots. Let your players bounce while sitting, kneeling, or standing on the inner tube (figure 117).

Have them jump in and out of the inner tube. Place the tire on a mat so children can bounce on one side and spring to the other half, landing inside the tire.

Make sure the air valve is pointing downward when the students are jumping. You might even want to tape the valve down with duct or strapping tape to make sure the games are all giggles.

Figure 117. Inner tube bounce.

Book Jumps

New jumpers do well jumping off of books. Work up from ordinary textbooks to encyclopedias to mammoth dictionaries. (Librarians may not care for this suggestion!)

Carpet Squares Games

These games use small samples of carpets that are usually available from stores that sell flooring. Carpets, like clothes, go in and out of style; when the new styles come in, the old samples are given away or sold inexpensively. Stores that install carpets also may have leftovers you can cut into squares.

See Chapter 8 on Games to Play with Boxes for the activities that use paper or cardboard squares. Carpet squares can be used in most of these games and will hold up better and longer than paper or cardboard.

Carpet squares also make interesting flying saucers! How far can you throw one?

Punching Bag

Stuff an old laundry or duffel bag with newspaper or old clothes and let children use it for a full-body punching bag.

Figure 118. Bucket lift.

Blanket Pull

One child sits on a sturdy old blanket and another child pulls the blanket along the floor. The puller gains strength and the one on the blanket works on upper trunk balance. If you are the puller (who is getting stronger every day, like it or not), purposely jiggle the blanket this way and that to give the child extra balancing practice.

Bucket Lift

As a way of strengthening legs, have your worker sit in a chair and lift a bucket with the legs from one spot to another (figure 118). Add a beanbag to the bucket and ask the child to dump the beanbags out of the bucket at the second spot, using just the legs and feet to accomplish it.

Keep increasing the number of beanbags in the bucket.

Plastic Foam Skates

Here is a use for those plastic foam trays that come with meat, besides making bathtub boats. Children simply put a foot on each tray and shuffle off, pretending that they are skating away. Lay out a group of obstacles for them to skate around. If you have more than two children, have a race. (You can eliminate the competitive aspect of this by "forgetting" to announce the winner, simply moving on quickly to the next game.) For children, the point and fun of racing should be the inspiration to go faster, not to win over others.

Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills

Telephone Wire Shapes

Obtain scraps of colorful wire from telephone companies, and let children use them to form different shapes (figure 119). Have children make creatures that then talk to each other during a puppet show.

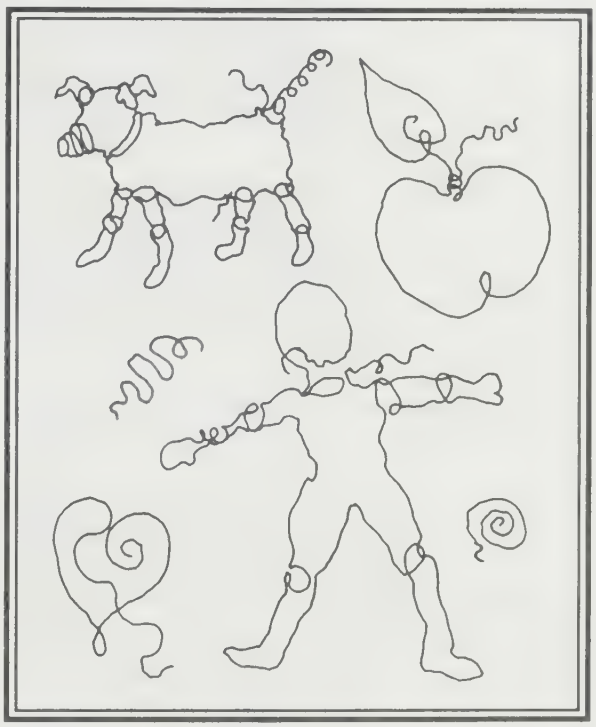


Figure 119. Telephone wire shapes.

Let children put the shapes into a soap and water solution with a bit of oil and food color added. This will form colorful and interestingly shaped bubbles.

Wallpaper Collage

Obtain books of wallpaper samples from wall-covering stores. Children can use the variety of textures, colors, and designs to make lovely collages. Tearing the shapes increases finger strength, and cutting them increases fine motor coordination.

Paste the paper on cardboard or use plastic foam trays from meat packages. These make instant frames.

Mosaic Tile Collage

Tile stores will give you broken tile that can be used to make interesting collages when glued to a thin piece of board. You can also cut the fragments with tile cutters to make exact patterns.

Miscellaneous Collage

Gather up a variety of items such as feathers, buttons, fabric, dry moss, foil, rickrack, bobby pins, sequins, macaroni, pipe cleaners, glitter, toothpicks, and yarn for gluing onto cardboard or styrofoam trays.

Edible Collage

Edible, yes, but not necessarily tasty. Have children glue on seeds of various kinds (peas, corn, beans) and noodles. Or make it tasty and use popcorn, sunflower seeds, and pumpkin seeds. Eat a little, glue a little. You could use edible "glue," too, but powdered sugar icing might taste odd with shelled sunflower seeds. Then again, it depends on the taster.

Tile Paintings

Have children paint pictures on larger sections of ceramic tile, then press a clean sheet of paper over each tile and lift it off carefully. This makes a gorgeous print.

Bubble Packing Paintings

This follows the same principle as *Tile Paintings*. Children can make interesting prints by painting bubble packing with different colors, then pressing paper onto the painted bubbles.

Cotton and Tongs

Make a pile of cotton balls and ask your learners to use a pair of tongs to transfer the balls one by one across the room to make another pile. Have them pick up other small objects such as peanuts and fabric swatches.

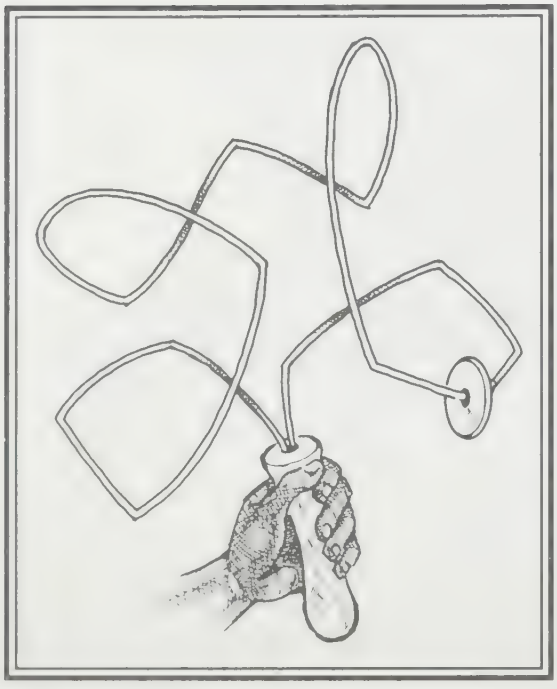


Figure 120. Wrist twist.

Nail Tangle

Bend a couple of used nails around each other in such a way that, by manipulating the nails, it is possible to separate them again.

Shishkebab Skewer Pick-Up

Have children use bamboo shishkebab skewers to stab and pick up various items such as clay balls, playdough, crumpled paper, peas, melon balls, raisins, apple chunks, peanut butter balls rolled in granola, and so on.

Wrist Twist

Twist bailing or hanger wire into turns and right angles. Slip a washer on the wire and attach both ends of the wire to a file handle (figure 120). The goal is to get the washer from one end of the wire to the other.

Packing Bubble Pinch

Sheets of bubble packing material come with different sizes of bubbles. They make a satisfying sound when pinched and popped, and children never seem to tire of the activity, even though you may tire of the sound.

Bread Tabs

At last there is a use for those little plastic tabs that hold bread's plastic bags closed. Children slip bread tabs on and off a cup hook for a mildly challenging fine motor activity.

More challenging is to screw four or five hooks into a piece of wood and let children hang the tabs on the screws. The learner must manipulate the tab in the right direction to get it on the hook. Also, because tabs come in different colors and sizes, you could add sorting to a lesson by requesting that only the same colors or sizes are grouped on each hook.

Rubbings

Rubbings are always a good way to encourage small hand muscles. Place a piece of paper over a textured object, such as a coin. Children then rub a crayon back and forth over the paper, directly over the coin. Like magic, the drawing on the coin will appear. Almost anything with a texture can be rubbed.

Spray Art

Fill a spray bottle with thinned paint or water tinted with food coloring. Let the learner spray out a painting on an opened-out paper bag, a large sheet of butcher paper, or the uncolored comics from a weekday newspaper. (You might want to do this activity outside, taping the paper to a fence so the spray bottle can be held in an upright position.) Manipulating the handle of a spray bottle is an excellent pre-scissor exercise.

Ice Cube Art

Make a concoction of 2 ounces of food coloring to 2 cups of water and freeze in an ice cube tray. Children will love painting with these slippery, cold "paint cubes" on a hot day.

Odd Painting

Painting is always a good fine motor activity, but it does not always require a brush. Other possible "paintbrushes" that may be more appropriate for your worker include sponges, cotton balls, eyedroppers, powder puffs, toothbrushes, shoe brushes, cotton swabs, corks, and even rubber toys.

Instead of painting only on paper, try burlap, wood, cardboard, grocery bags, and rocks.

Egg Carton Throw

This is an idea suggested by Mary, a parent of one of my clients. I had lamented that there wasn't much to be done with egg cartons except to make those egg carton caterpillars or use them for sorting games. She suggested that kids use a pebble or other small object and throw it into the small depressions from varying distances. Sounds like good fine motor/eye-hand therapy to me!

Having the children make paintings while blindfolded can be a fun alternative, and sometimes the paintings come out better!

Let children put a blob of paint on the paper and blow at it with a straw. This splatters the paint in an interesting way and exercises lung capacity and oral-motor control.

Eyedropper Art

Using an eyedropper filled with paint or ink not only encourages small finger movement but also the cognitive act of how to fill the dropper and control the movement when it drips out. Possible eyedropper art suggestions are described below.

- Drop some paint from just above the paper. Increase the dropping distance and notice the difference in the results.

  Drip a few drops of different colors on a piece of paper. Fold the paper in half for a Rorschach effect.
- Drip a big drop of one color, then speckle it with little drops of another color.
- Drop paint on different surfaces such as dry, wet, or damp paper, waxed paper, or aluminum foil. What is the difference in effect?
- Drop puddles of paint on the paper, then tip the paper various ways.

Other things to use as eyedropper paint are food color diluted with water or a vinegar-water-oil mix.

Chalk Games

Chalk will sometimes inspire children because it feels so nice in the hand. It is a good medium for encouraging drawing on the sidewalk.

Scrape colored chalk into water and lay a piece of white paper on the surface. This makes lovely patterned stationery. (Don't use the dust-free chalk for this activity.)

Hook-and-Pile Finger Pull

Increase finger strength by covering old plastic curlers and a board with hook-and-loop fastening tape. The player pulls the curlers off the board. You can usually find the curlers in various sizes, to exercise different sets of muscles.

Bandage Hide

Plastic bandage boxes with their little hinged tops make a nice manipulative game when children open them to find the hidden present inside.

Film Canisters (available free from camera or film stores) increase the level of difficulty for the above activity because the tops are a little harder to pull off.

Pill Containers are the most difficult because they take a twist as well as a push to remove. If they are child-proof, they require even more skills. (Children are usually more adept than adults at getting these off!)

Beading

Bead stringing is an excellent bilateral activity and it can be done with a variety of materials. Chapter 2 describes a beginner beading activity with cut-up toilet paper rolls for beads and rope for string. The next level could be thread spools (painted?) and a shoestring. For the child who is ready for smaller beads, try buttons, short pieces of colored straws, or macaroni.

Another beading material that is a big hit with children are the breakfast cereals shaped like circles. After children string the cereal, they wear the necklaces around their necks and have something to munch on the rest of the day!

Sewing

You can make your own beginner's sewing card with a sturdy piece of cardboard, a hole puncher, a good-sized blunt needle, and some yarn.

Weaving

Make your own loom by turning a chair upside down and tightly string yarn or fabric strips from leg to leg, firmly fastening each strip one to two inches apart (figure 121). Children then weave other fabric strips in and out of the warp.

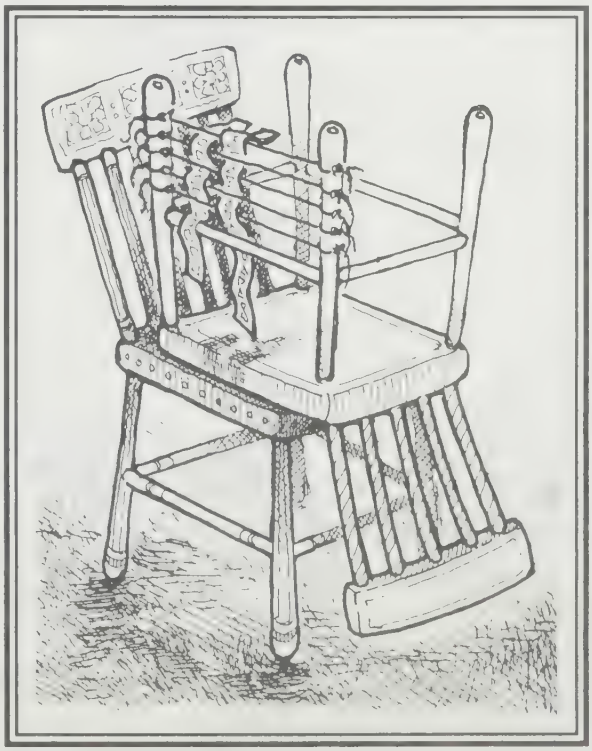


Figure 121. Weaving.

Embroidery

Make embroidery kits for children from empty food cartons and scraps of cloth. Cut off the top two or three inches of a cottage cheese or sour cream container. Remove the lid and cut out the center of the lid, leaving a

Figure 122. Hardware goodies.

Figure 123. Fabric dominoes.

¼" margin around the edge. Lay cheesecloth or loosely woven fabric over the top of the container and snap the lid back on.

Hardware Goodies

The hardware store is a wonderful place to shop for fine motor toys. You'll find nuts that fit onto bolts, hooks that snap onto rings, and a lot of other things that go neatly together that will get small fingers working and young minds figuring (figure 122).

Hair Curlers

Garage sales always seem to have at least one box of hair curlers that lost out to the blow dryer. Some curlers have parts that fit together, or you can provide hair clips that can be clipped onto the curlers. Children can play with these while you are preparing the next activity. These activities are especially good for people with weak grasp.

Banded Box

Another good transitional activity is to give a child a box with a rubber band around it. Sometimes taking a rubber band off a box is the perfect challenge for small or weak fingers.

Have a treat or an interesting toy inside as a reward for hard work.

Cheese Peels

This fine motor activity provides an instant reward. Let your learner use a potato peeler and a hunk of cheese to make some cheese peels.

Fabric Dominoes

Make your own set of dominoes (or better yet, have your learner make the set) by pasting fabric pieces onto cardboard rectangles (figure 123). Players match the fabric patterns instead of the usual white dots.

Cork Drop

Corks are a wonderful item to have on hand (they look so useful and just seem to feel good). Oatmeal boxes are also difficult for a pack rat type to toss—they are so colorful and so round.

Combine these irresistible objects into a toddler toy: cut a hole in the top of the oatmeal container and let the child drop the cork inside—good fine motor and eye-hand coordination. If the child takes the top off the oatmeal carton and puts it back on, object permanence and motor planning are included!

Glove Puppets

Cut the fingers off old gloves. Let your players draw faces on the fingertips and put the puppets on their fingers for puppet show time.

Children with more advanced finger manipulation can sew on beads, fringe, fabric, and ribbons to make faces and clothes.

Spool Puppets

Children can make funny people by painting empty thread spools and gluing on pipe cleaners, yarn, and fabrics.

Paper Clip Challenge

Putting a paper clip on and taking it off a piece of paper is a challenge for some fingers. Put ten large paper clips around the outside of a piece of thin cardboard (such as an old manila folder or the backing from a legal tablet). Ask your learner to take all the paper clips off and put them back on again. Work toward using small paper clips on a sheet of flimsy paper. Remember to use such mundane tasks as this when enlarging manipulating skills.

Poking Box

Isolating the index finger is a developmental stage of hand control that can be encouraged with this poking box. Find a shallow box with a removable lid, or cut down the bottom of a shoe box so that it is 1½″ to 2″ deep when the lid is replaced. Make holes in the lid, a little larger than the size of the finger you are trying to entice. Fill various parts of the box with objects of different textures, such as cotton, peanut shells, sandpaper, and velvet scraps (figure 124). Each poke of the finger will yield a different sensation.

Hair rollers can be filled with different materials for finger poking, too.

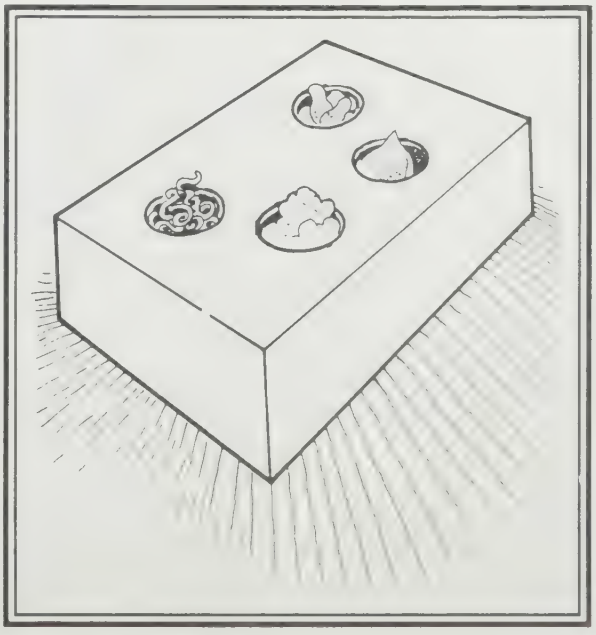


Figure 124. Poking box.

Edible Playdough

Playdough is a wonderful medium for finger strengthening and increasing manipulating skills, but all too often children want to eat it because it looks so good. Rather than spend your energy trying to prevent this, make up a playdough that children can eat safely.

Peanut Butter Playdough
- 2 cups peanut butter
- 2 cups powdered milk
- 1 cup honey

Oatmeal Playdough
- 2 cups oatmeal
- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup water

Homemade Playdough
- 2½ cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon oil

Have beginners make snakes from the dough. They can make a slit in one end for a mouth and add a tongue and eyes.

You can also make an edible dough from biscuit mix (packaged or made from scratch). Mix up a fairly stiff batch and give each child a large lump. Let them flatten out the dough on cookie sheets and make handprints in it. Bake the dough according to package or cookbook directions, and let the children eat their handprints.

Figure 125. Finger paint.

Edible Finger Paint

Finger painting can begin in the high chair or on a lap top surface for the child in a wheelchair who needs encouragement to use the arms. Use finger paint that is safe to eat, such as ketchup, mayonnaise, prepared mustard, thickened gravy, or applesauce colored with grape juice concentrate.

Nonedible Finger Paint

Mix ½ cup of starch with one quart of water. Add poster paint or food coloring, or use natural coloring such as beet juice or soy sauce.

To keep the mess contained in one spot, have children use the finger paint on cookie sheets.

You could also put the finger paint on a mirror. Encourage children to swish the stuff around and find their faces (figure 125). (Plain cornstarch works as well as fingerpaint for this purpose and achieves the same effect with less mess.)

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

Bottle Bat

This makes a wonderful bat for just about any game. Cut a dowel to fit inside the opening of a plastic two-liter soft-drink bottle (figure 126). Wrap some duct tape around the dowel and bottle opening to keep it secure, and you have the niftiest bat, hockey stick, or golf club.

Refer to the newspaper bat games (croquet, hockey, golf) listed in Chapter 2 for game ideas.

Figure 126. Bottle bat.

Plastic Foam Blocks

At last there is a use for the leftover plastic foam blocks that are used to pack small appliances. These blocks can be used to hold nails and provide the right amount of resistance for a child just learning how to hit a nail with a hammer (figure 127). The blocks hold the nail upright and allow the nail to respond immediately to any hammer blows. If you don't have a small hammer, use a rock.

You can also use these foam blocks with screws and a screwdriver.

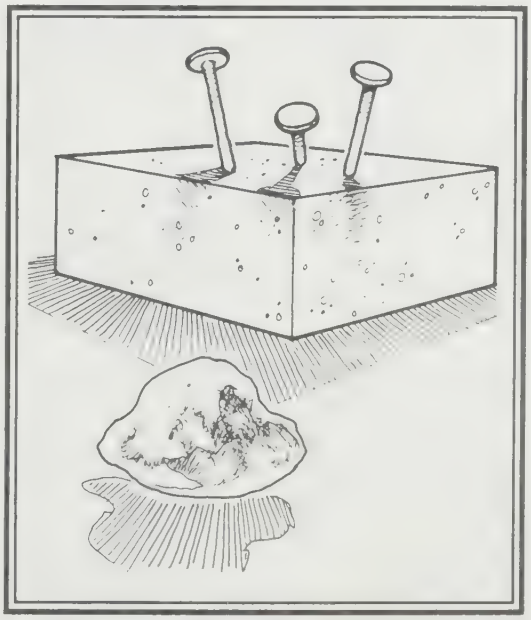


Figure 127. Plastic foam blocks.

Cutting

Give children experiences in cutting (with a dull bread knife) food items such as bananas, cooked potatoes, and hard-boiled eggs, or nonfood items such as playdough or clay.

Curler Poke

Here is another use for those old hair rollers. Hold the curler up and ask your worker to follow it with his eyes. When you say the word, the child should poke a finger into it. This is good for tracking and eye-hand coordination.

Fabric Scraps

Pieces of fabric, especially if they are light, make great throwing games for children with a weak grasp and poor coordination. Have them throw the fabric in the air and catch it, throw it to another person, or throw it so that it falls on or covers an object.

Fabric scraps can also be used for the beginning juggler. The scraps are slower to fall than balls, and they provide a good way for children to learn how to catch with one hand.

Painting

If you have a chalkboard, a bucket, and a paintbrush, let your learner paint with water a design you have drawn. If you drew a person, for example, ask the painter to paint out the arms, then the legs, and so on. This provides an exercise in arm extension, spatial and body awareness, eye-hand coordination, and potentially sloppy fun.

Plastic Jug Toss

Cut off the bottom of a plastic gallon milk container, leaving the handle intact. Put a ball of any kind inside the container. Have a child jerk the container up so that the ball flies out of the container. The child then tries to catch the ball with the container.

This game can be played with two or more people in an unusual game of throw and catch.

Figure 128. Bleach bottle flip.

Bleach Bottle Flip

Cut off the bottom of a bleach bottle or a plastic gallon milk container, leaving the handle intact. Attach a soft ball (such as a large yarn pom-pom) to a string, and tie the string to the handle (figure 128). The player holds onto the handle and, by jerking it, gets the ball to flip into the container.

Sheet Target

Make four or five holes of varying sizes in an old sheet. Hang the sheet from a clothesline or other support and let your player use it for target practice.

Variation: It's fun to do this with two players, because the player waiting for the ball to come through the hole must be alert, never knowing which hole, if any, the ball will come through, depending only on the rhythm of the throwing. Use a sockball for the ball (see Chapter 9).

Figure 129. Squirter targets.

Squirter Targets

Light a candle or two and have your player put the flames out with a water-filled squirter (figure 129). The recycled squirter can be a plastic shampoo or dish detergent bottle or a spray bottle. For safety, of course, this activity requires adult supervision.

For sanity's sake, have some extra candles if you want to play this game more than once. Wet candles are hard to re-light!

Balloon Dart

Pinning blown up balloons to a wall and having players throw darts at them is not new. It is a standard feature at any carnival.

The difference in this activity is that the player draws faces on the balloons first with a felt marker. Besides encouraging more fine motor activity, this can be psychologically healing: kids can take out their aggression on balloons, busting them instead of people.

Throwing Games

Use a variety of objects for a child to toss in a sequence, to sense the difference in how those objects feel when thrown.

Objects for throwing include beanbags, sandbags, paper-stuffed nylons, aluminum foil balls, newspaper balls, sockballs, masking tape balls, and balls made out of thousands of rubber bands.

A Stone's Throw

If you often work with children in their homes, you might find yourself one day taking a child for a walk over uneven terrain to work on balancing skills, then sitting on the ground for a rest.

You can use this rest period for eye-hand work by gathering up a pile of rocks and taking turns throwing other rocks at the pile. The rocks that are hit belong to the hitter. Continue the game until all rocks are hit, or just pick out a larger rock to aim at.

To make the game equal, the person with the weaker or less accurate throw can sit nearer to the pile or large rock. (Don't feel bad if that person is you.)

For fun, see how many rocks can be hit with eyes closed!

Bird Cage Holder Targets

One time at a garage sale, I found a standing bird cage holder, the kind that has a metal circle on top with a hook (see below). I can't tell you the number of times I've hung things on it to aim at. I also hang a bell from the hook so that after children cross the balance beam, they can reach up and ring the bell to announce their successful crossing to the world!

Plastic Foam Tray Hit

If you have two plastic foam trays, let a child throw one up in the air and see how long it can be kept aloft by hitting it with the other tray. Annie, a lovely girl in one of my classes, came up with this one.

Plastic Foam Hat Hit

If you put a plastic foam box on your head, then tilt your head so that it falls off, it can then be batted with a plastic foam tray. Of course, always-thinking Tyler came up with this one.

Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination

Different Kicks

Make a variety of balls to kick into an open box on the floor. Encourage the player to be aware of how each ball requires a different level of force to kick. Balls can include coffee cans, milk cartons, paper bags with crumpled paper inside, sockballs, aluminum foil balls, aluminum cans, and newspaper balls.

Balloon Kick

Tie a balloon to one end of a string; tie the other end to the leg of a table. The player can kick away, but the balloon will never get out of reach.

Figure 130. Baseball alternative.

Games to Enhance Spatial Sense

Baseball Alternative

A fine game of solo baseball can be played using a tennis racket for a bat, a beanbag for a ball, and a figure-eight layout for the field (figure 130). The ball is easy to hit, and the figure-eight run is a good spatial awareness exercise.

Chair Fort

Put two chairs back to back and a few feet apart; drape a sheet over them. Children love this little hidey-hole away from peering adult eyes and, since it is a small space, they get to be big.

Games to Enhance Laterality

Try these games, listed under **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination:**

Plastic Foam Blocks
Cutting
Curler Poke
Fabric Scraps
Painting
Plastic Jug Toss
Bleach Bottle Flip
Sheet Target
Squirter Targets
Balloon Dart
Throwing Games
A Stone's Throw

Also try these games, listed under **Games to Enhance Eye-Foot Coordination:**

Different Kicks
Balloon Kick

Games to Enhance Balance

Different Shoes

Collect a variety of shoes for the player to use while walking across the floor. Suggest different movements other than plain walking, such as hopping, skipping, and jumping.

"Shoes" can include high heels, big boots, scuffs, shoe boxes, bags, coffee cans, and clogs.

Wearing only one shoe also increases balance sense as well as laterality.

Palm Carry

The player carries objects on an outstretched palm from point A to point B while you encourage the techniques of good posture. The objects to be carried can be anything from a peanut to a plastic cup of water.

Beginner's Balance

Sometimes it helps children who are just learning how to stand on one foot to hold onto something (such as the end of an unsharpened pencil) while the adult holds the other end. (One child gained such confidence in the pencil that just holding it alone helped.)

Another idea is to let the beginner put the toe of the nonstanding foot on the floor. If barefoot, the child can start with the ball of the other foot on the floor and progress to just the nail of the big toe.

Balance Race

Have your players try balancing a variety of objects on their heads: pillows, beanbags, oranges, and the old stand-by, books. Have players try to beat their own time, or do relay games.

Pumpkin Stand

This admittedly is a seasonal game, but on Halloween there are always too many pumpkins and not enough things to do with them beside carve them up (which is a good fine motor skill as well as eye-hand coordination if you don't want to slice your hand). A line of pumpkins of the right dimensions for the size feet you are working with makes a lovely, lumpy balance beam. Have your player step carefully from one to the other.

Squash also works well for jumping-over-and-around games.

Games to Enhance Rhythm

Small Drums

Take both ends off an oatmeal or salt box and stretch a balloon across the top.

Stretch pieces of heavy rubber from an old inner tube over the open ends of an empty coffee can and lace or tie them tightly in place.

Tambourines

Punch matching holes around the rims of two aluminum pie pans. Lace them together nearly all the way around, insert a few bottle caps into the cavity between them, and finish the lacing.

Sew jingle bells to the edge of a sturdy paper plate.

Wrist Bells

Sew bells to a band of wide elastic and stitch the overlapped ends together to make a bracelet.

Kazoo

Punch a small hole (¼″ diameter) near one end of a cardboard tube (such as an empty toilet paper roll), and wrap waxed paper tightly around that end of the tube, leaving the hole uncovered. Use a rubber band to keep the waxed paper in place. Children hum into the open end of the instrument.

Shakers

Fill two metal or plastic lids of the same size with beans, peas, corn, buttons, rice, or bells. Glue one top to another, and tape the seam securely with duct or adhesive tape.

Xylophone

Use different lengths of discarded copper tubing or steel pipe, or different thicknesses and lengths of wood. Lay them next to one another on a piece of foam or hang each piece like chimes with strong fishing line.

Hang nails of assorted lengths and thicknesses with string from a board.

Maracas

Partly fill a juice can with rocks, then replace the metal lid and tape securely closed.

Guitars

Make a hole in a box; wrap rubber bands around the box and over the hole.

Plunker

Tie a sturdy piece of elastic taut between two nails on a board.

Games

➳ Have children move to the sounds (see *Musical Movements* under **Games to Enhance Group Playing**).

- Have them move to the way the sound makes them feel.
- Do a sequence for the player to imitate (for example, shake a tambourine twice, hit a drum, and stamp feet).
- Have the child experiment with fast, slow, loud, and soft sounds on the same instrument.
- Teach simple 1/2, 2/4, and 4/4 rhythm.

Games to Enhance Flexibility

Pick-ups

Lay different objects around on the floor and have the player stand with feet a certain distance apart (figure 131). The game is to pick up all the objects on the floor without moving the feet.

Change the width of the stance to increase flexibility or balance skills.

Figure 131. Pick-ups.

Games to Enhance Group Playing

Feather Blow

Gather children together in a tight circle, then throw a feather into the air above their heads. Ask them to keep the feather aloft by blowing on it.

Mummy Sheet Wrap

Partners take turns wrapping each other up in a sheet, leaving the feet free for jumping around (figure 132). The wrapper is responsible for the mummy and takes it for a walk, trying to prevent falls. This gives the wrapper some work on arm strength while the mummy works on leg strength. However, do this only when there is a mat available, to protect children from the inevitable falls.

Figure 132. Mummy sheet wrap.

Caterpillar Walk

Children get into a crawling position, one behind another, holding onto each other's ankles. Put a sheet over the children so that only

Figure 133. Caterpillar walk.

the first child can see (figure 133). That child leads the rest of the caterpillar around the room and through a series of obstacles (for example, over a mat or under a table).

Variations:

- Make two caterpillars and have them race with each other.
- Have a leader standing up to direct traffic: "Head toward the back wall and then take a right turn at the basketball hoop."

Serpent Crawl

This is a variation of *Caterpillar Walk,* above. Instead of crawling, the children lie on their stomachs and squiggle and squirm to go forward.

Sheet and Ball Toss

Children hold onto the edges of a sheet with a beach ball or a balloon in the middle. By jerking the sheet cooperatively, they can get the ball to go up and down.

Once they have mastered that technique, divide the children into two groups, each with their own sheet, and have them toss the ball back and forth to each other.

Ghosts

If you have enough sheets, cover each child and let them wander around the room trying to find others, making ghostly sounds. If the idea of children tripping and banging into each other doesn't appeal to you, let just one child be the ghost and find another child to be the next ghost.

As an adult, the idea of wandering around without sight seems unappealing, but the only "problem" with this game is that there are always children who can't wait to be caught. They will make a point of getting in the ghost's path so they can have a turn next.

Kids in a Pocket

Sew two sheets together along three sides, have several children step into the bag, and have them try to get from point A to point B. Again, these games may seem unappealing to the adult in us, but for many children this tumbling and squishing of bodies feels like a fun way to make connections with others.

Some children, however, will find this kind of closeness unappealing. Respect that difference, perhaps allowing that child or children to stay outside the bag and to direct it verbally to its destination.

Big Green Ball Games

If you're an occupational or physical pediatric therapist, you probably own a very large green ball of industrial strength. There are some great games you can play with this ball in a group.

- Hot potato, cold potato, bouncy potato, and twirly potato. "Cold potato" means participants throw the ball underhand gently to each other until a chosen leader calls out "hot potato," at which point they begin to bat it at each other. "Bouncy" means to bounce it to another person; "twirly" means to twirl in a circle before throwing it. Encourage players to think of more names and kinds of movements: squat potato, jumpy potato, kick potato, and so on.
- Two people hold the green ball between their bodies; two more people edge close to the first pair. Using only their bodies, the players transfer the ball to the second pair.
- Players stand in a line and pass the ball backward over their heads to the person behind, then return it between the legs.
- Children lie on their stomachs and roll the ball to each other using hands, heads, or elbows.

Musical Movements

Assign a movement to the sound of each musical instrument. For example, ask children to twirl when they hear the bell, jump when you shake the tambourine, and hop when they hear the flute. Then play each instrument by itself for random periods of time to encourage the children to listen or watch carefully to see what you are going to do next. Occasionally play two instruments at once so that children are hopping while they are twirling!

This game is excellent for children in wheelchairs or for whom rapid changes in movement would be too difficult. They can be the music makers under your direction. Line these children up facing the dancers, with their backs to you. Explain that when you tap them on the back it means they are to play; when you stop touching them, they are to stop.

Balloon Games

Although balloons do not recycle well, they are inexpensive and plentiful enough and are wonderfully versatile. Consider these group games:

- A group of players sees how many times they hit the balloon to keep it from touching the ground, trying to keep it up longer each time.

- Change the rules: sometimes players can hit only with one hand, sometimes they must alternate hands, or just use their heads, elbows, or knees.
- They keep it in the air using water squirters.
- They keep it in the air by blowing through straws or just blowing with their mouths.
- They keep it in the air by hitting it with ping pong paddles.

Balloon Train

The group forms a train with a balloon between each person's body. As the train chugs along, the children try to stay together and not drop any of the balloons.

Balloon-Fanning Relay

Divide the class into equal teams lined up in two single files. Using a fan, the first person fans the balloon to a designated spot, then returns it to the starting line. The next person does the same, and so on, until the last person in each line has fanned the balloon.

Balloon Volleyball

Place chairs in a row to form a "net." Teams bat the balloon back and forth over the net. Points are made if the other team lets the balloon touch the floor or hits it more than three times consecutively.

Balloon Pole Run

This may seem a little pointless, but toddlers will think it makes perfectly good sense. Give each child a small balloon to hold under each arm and have them run around an adult who is playing the part of a pole.

Cooperative Pin the Tail

See under **Games to Enhance Group Playing** in Chapter 7.

Squirt Bottles

Fill empty plastic shampoo or dish detergent bottles with water and let the children take aim at each other outside on a hot summer day.

Firefighter's Pass

Another good outdoor game that encourages cooperation and strength is to have children line up and pass a bucket of water from hand to hand. Use this method to fill up a child-sized pool so that there is a logical reason for the game (not that children insist on logic).

Variation: The children pass the filled bucket down the row until the end person dumps it into a waiting bucket. That child sets down the empty bucket, picks up the filled bucket, and runs back to the beginning of the row (figure 134). The children pass the bucket down the row again for the last person to dump. This continues until there is hardly any water left. The idea is to see how many runs can be made before the water is all sloshed out. Two teams can compete or one team can try for their personal best.

Figure 134. Firefighter's pass.

Firefighter's Firewood Brigade

I think it's a good idea for children to know about the firefighter's bucket-brigade way of getting things done. I use it in my own home as a painless way of getting the firewood in the house.

Clothes Relay

For a fun relay race, pile costumes or oversized clothes at one end of the room. Two people, the "dressers," stand beside the pile. The game starts with two children running from one end of the room to the pile of clothes and the children who will dress them. The dressers outfit the racers, who then run back to the starting line (figure 135).

The high heels and dragging clothes add the challenge of balancing to the running.

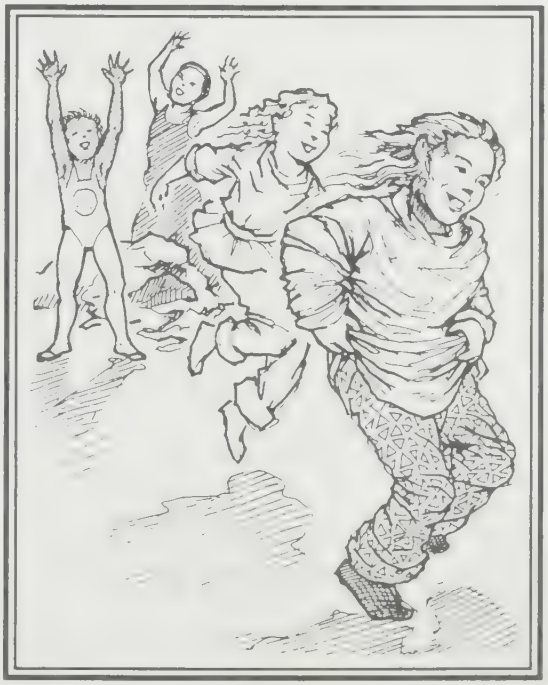
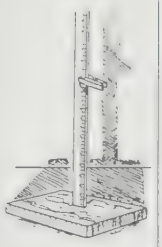


Figure 135. Clothes relay.

Bubble Burst

Players stand around a bubble blower who is perched on a chair, blowing bubbles down to the masses. The players' job, should they choose to accept it, is to clap and thereby burst the bubbles.



13
Games for People Who Have Hemiplegia

Working with a person who has weakness on one side requires activities that utilize the weak side, thereby increasing muscle mass and strength. It is also necessary to provide activities that use the strong side because this side needs to be even stronger and more able to manipulate than it might have been previously, especially if it is the nondominant side. (Note: It is psychologically better—and more accurate—to refer to the differences in strength and ability as the "weaker side" and the "stronger side," rather than the "good side" and the "bad side." Who wants to have a bad side, or worse, have others referring to part of *their* body as "bad"?!)

Bilateral activities should also be encouraged. The weaker side can work as a helping arm to avoid "neglect," the state in which people with hemiplegia ignore the weaker side, thereby causing further atrophy of the muscles.

Look through the Laterality, Eye-Hand, and Eye-Foot Coordination activities in other chapters of this book for games that use one arm or one leg (kicking, throwing, hopping, etc.) and bilateral activities where one arm or leg is used only as a helper (such as scissor work). Also look through the Fine Motor Control sections for activities that encourage the use of the small hand muscles.

When choosing group activities in which the challenged child is being mainstreamed in the group, consider activities that (1) require only one strong side, and (2) use general movements that do not require specific coordination. (Make sure the child has enough balance to handle the activity.)

Some specific activities that are well suited to the above goals are listed below. Look through the book for others.

Upper Extremity Games

Hair Curlers

Garage sales always seem to have at least one box of hair curlers that lost out to the blow dryer. Some curlers have parts that fit together, or you can provide hair clips that can be clipped onto the curlers. They are especially good for people with weak pincer and palmar grasps.

Cork Drop

Cut a hole in the top of an oatmeal container and let the player drop corks into the container. The size of the hole determines the difficulty of the challenge. Start with the lid off, if necessary, and work toward a smaller hole.

Plastic Foam Blocks

Use plastic foam blocks (the kind that are used to pack small appliances) as pounding blocks. The foam provides just the right amount of resistance to hold nails upright, and it responds immediately to any hammer blows. If a hammer is too heavy, use a small rock.

Painting

If you have a chalkboard, a bucket, and a paintbrush, let your learner paint with water a design you have drawn or that the client has drawn with the strong hand. If you drew a person, for example, ask the painter to paint out the arms, then the legs, and so on. This provides an exercise in arm extension, spatial and body awareness, eye-hand coordination, and potentially sloppy fun.

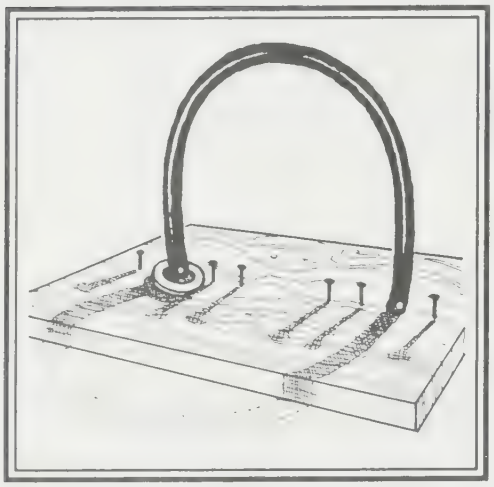


Figure 136. Pipe slide.

Pipe Slide

This is a homemade version of a piece of equipment often seen in therapy catalogs that is used to increase arm range and strength. Curve a piece of hose and place each end onto a nail that has been hammered into a flat piece of wood (figure 136). Put a brass ring on the hose and ask your worker to slide the ring from one side of the hose to the other. The deeper the curve, the harder the task, so make a progression of nails to change the depth of the curve.

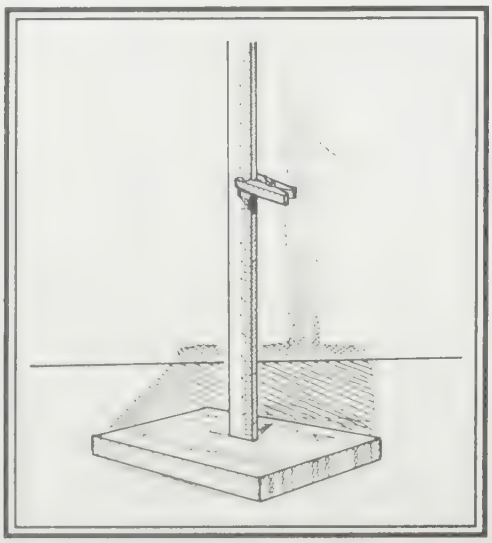


Figure 137. Yardstick pinch.

Yardstick Pinch

Insert the end of a yardstick into a slot you have carved in a flat piece of board so that the yardstick stands upright (figure 137). Place a spring clothespin on the ruler and ask your worker to keep trying to place that clothespin higher up on the stick, measuring the progress.

Hoop Batter

This activity, described in **Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination** in Chapter 4, is helpful in that it is a bilateral activity and encourages the use of two hands. As mentioned above, the side of the body that is weakened tends to be neglected, and use

of both hands needs to be encouraged when possible. Games such as *Hoop Batter* require the player to hold a bat. If the weaker hand can grip, the stronger side can provide the movement.

Lower Extremity Games

Stand and Kick

Line up a row of cartons, then have the player walk along and kick the cartons down, one by one.

This game is especially good for children who also need work on balancing.

Kick Around

Set up a row of milk cartons about a foot apart, then have the player kick a yogurt container around the cartons in a slalom fashion.

Lid Kicks

Players see how far they can kick their lids. Have them use first the right foot and then the left.

Lid Flip

Lay out some lids—yogurt lids with their containers balanced on top work well—and have your player flip the lid with a toe, making the container fall off (figure 138). Lay out a series of these and see how quickly the player can flip the containers off the lids.

Figure 138. Lid flip.

Double Lids

The player kicks a lid with one foot, then tries to kick a second lid with the other foot so that it hits the first lid.

Bucket Lift

As a way of strengthening legs, have your worker sit in a chair and lift a bucket with the legs from one spot to another. Add a beanbag to the bucket and ask the person to dump the beanbag out of the bucket at the second spot, using just the legs and feet to accomplish it.

Keep increasing the number of beanbags in the bucket.

Mainstreaming Group Games

Lid Touch

Players are scattered around the room; the person who is It kicks or scoots a lid around on the floor. The first player to be touched by the lid becomes It and takes over the kicking of the lid.

Variation: When the lid touches someone's foot, that person begins to kick another lid around the room. Now there are two people who are It. When another person is touched, there are three Its, and so on, until everyone has a lid.

This is a good group game for a mainstreamed child with hemiplegia who has one strong leg and an ability to balance.

Hit the Buns and Run

Lay sockballs (stuffed with socks only; no beans or sand) around on the floor. When someone shouts, "Go for the buns," everyone runs for the nearest sockball and aims it at the nearest gluteus maximus. Players can give themselves a score for each hit but they will probably be too busy running toward the next sockball while trying to protect their own rear to bother.

You'll know when the game is over: players will be lying exhausted—panting, but happy—on the floor or ground.

This is an especially good game to play when there are motorically slower players in the group, because there is so much action, one can't tell who is doing what and how accurately it is being done. Everyone is just having fun, and sockballs are so soft that no one gets hurt.

If you want the players to be more accurate in their throwing, change the name of the game to *Hit the Knee and Flee, Hit the Back and Attack, Hit the Arm and Do No Harm, Hit the Leg and Make 'Em Beg, Hit the Fingers if They Linger,* or *Hit the Neck and Not the Deck.*

Ask the players to come up with their own little ditty.

14
Games for People Who Use Wheelchairs

The games described here work well with older people in rehabilitation units and skilled nursing facilities. These patients may be in wheelchairs or may have difficulty moving, thereby needing games that are primarily sedentary. Much of the equipment can be purchased at toy stores or is already a part of the therapy materials usually on hand, but the items are used in a different way.

This chapter is not meant to be a comprehensive list of games; rather, it presents ideas that may inspire you to think of many others.

These activities work best in groups, because therapy done alone can become boring. In groups, however, players tend to cheer each other on and notice and be glad when someone does something they could not do before. Group games seem to add the element of hope and lift the spirit, a more holistic way to do therapy.

Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills

Sandbag Bottom Bouncers

Toy stores carry these weighted-bottom inflatable figures; every time you hit one, it bounces right back up.

Players can work on increasing general strength and endurance by hitting the figures repeatedly. Beanbags or rolled up socks also can be thrown at the bouncers, an activity that works on arm range and strength. If you ask that certain spots be hit, such as the figure's nose, then eye-hand coordination and focusing are also enhanced.

The toy can also be kicked to work on leg strength and range and, if placed between two people or in the middle of a circle of people, it can be kicked back and forth or from different directions to make a social occasion out of the activity as well.

Hanging Balloon

Hang a balloon from the ceiling on a long piece of string. Have two players sit across from each other with the balloon between them, batting the balloon back and forth.

You can also make bats from rolled-up newspapers, dowels and soft-drink bottles, or hangers and nylon stockings for patients with more limited range, or just to add variety to the game.

Ball Toss #1

Tossing a ball around in a circle is not exactly the newest of ideas for group games. But tossing two or three balls around at the same time does add a new element that increases attention span and focusing. It is all too easy to "space out" when one lonely ball is going around a large circle of people. If you do use one ball, it is helpful to have the players call out the name of the person to whom they are throwing the ball. This increases awareness of others and memory.

Ball Toss #2

If you are using two or three balls to toss around in a circle, make them of differing weights, textures, and sizes. For example, use a beach ball, a sponge ball, and a regular rubber ball. The differences increase awareness.

Figure 139. Cane hits.

Cane Hits

Have one person hold a cane in a horizontal position. Another person tosses a beach ball or a large sponge ball to that person, who tries to hit the ball with the side of the cane (figure 139). A third person, who needs work on balancing and flexibility, can be the one to chase and fetch the balls that get away.

Long-Handled Sponge Soccer

In a stationary version of soccer, each player in the circle sports a long-handled sponge. Roll a beach ball on the floor and let players hit it back and forth (figure 140). The idea is to see how many times it can be batted before it gets away. You could also set up two goals (cardboard boxes or wastebaskets on their sides) at two sides of the circle.

Games to Enhance Fine Motor Skills

Bottle Cap Slide

Clients flick bottle caps across a smooth-topped table, aiming at a center target. Players can also try to aim their sliding bottle caps so that they bang into each other.

Pennies and other coins also work well for this game.

Poker

Many of your older wheelchair clients probably know how to play five-card stud, and sitting around playing cards helps fine motor control as players hold the cards and ante up the chips. Card games also enhance mental focusing and social interaction.

Figure 140. Long-handled sponge soccer.

Games to Enhance Eye-Hand Coordination

Although these games focus on eye-hand coordination, they also work on increasing endurance and strength, which recuperating people usually need to develop.

Ring Toss #1

Ring toss games can be bought at a toy store, or you can make your own ringers out of garden hose (see Chapter 4). The game basically involves throwing a ring over a stick.

Because different patients have different skill levels, either arrange the position of the stick or the position of the wheelchairs so that it is easier for the person with the lowest skill level and harder for the person with the highest. No one will object to this type of arrangement, and it reduces frustration and increases success.

To pick up those fallen ringers, encourage the players to use "reachers," long-handled tongs that increase a person's reach. Using them in a game such as this gives patients practice so that when they eventually are discharged, they will be adept with them for home use.

Ring Toss #2

In this game, use the ringers for the targets. Lay out a series of these little circles on the floor and have the players toss small beanbags into them.

Socks and Buckets

Buckets and dishpans make easy targets for rolled-up socks or beanbags. Sometimes the players can be sitting in a circle with the bucket in the middle, sometimes in a line with the target moved to various places. The change in the target's position encourages the players to use their muscles in different ways.

Checkers and Basins

This is a step up from the game above, requiring the players to throw a smaller object. Have the players throw checkers into the dishpan or bucket from varying distances.

Targets

Toy stores (and garage sales) sell darts, pea shooters, and other kinds of target toys which require holding a small object (fine motor strength) and aiming at a target (eye-hand coordination).

These toys usually come with a traditional target that you can place on the wall, but a hanging balloon makes a strongly visible target that provides a satisfyingly large movement when it is hit. Add bells to the balloon for auditory rewards!

Cone Bowling

Use those cones that therapists have to increase the range of arm movement, or obtain empty thread cones from sewing machine stores that demonstrate overlock sewing machines.

Lay the cones out in a bowling pattern or stack them on top of each other; have the players knock them down with a ball.

Games to Enhance Laterality

It is common to find stroke patients in a rehab unit, and much therapy is done to try to increase the strength and coordination of a patient with hemiplegia.

See the activities in Chapter 13, Games for People Who Have Hemiplegia.

Games to Enhance Balance

Work on balance by playing any of the games with the player standing alone or using a walker or a cane. A game of checkers placed on a high table between two standing players can provide a good opportunity to work on balance.

Hanging Balloon

This activity is described in the section on **Games to Enhance Gross Motor Skills.** Have players stand while batting at the balloon. This requires the players to adjust their balance to accommodate a swinging balloon.

Dancing

Dancing is a great balance activity because stable partners can be paired with those who have difficulty with balance. The movements can be a simple two-step or as challenging as the jitterbug. Playing music that was popular during the players' "heyday" moves the spirit as well as the body!

Players in wheelchairs can hold hands with someone who is moving, they can be wheeled around in quick moves (upper torso balancing!), or they can provide the percussion sounds.

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